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Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives
First session
New York, 17–28 May 1999
Item 2 of the provisional agenda*
Status of preparations for the special session

Status of preparations for the special session

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 50/161, decided to hold a special session in the year 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and to consider further actions and initiatives. The Assembly, in its resolution 53/28, welcomed the offer of the Government of Switzerland to convene the special session at the United Nations Office at Geneva, and decided that the session would be held from 26 to 30 June 2000.

II. Preparatory process

2. In its resolution 51/202, the Assembly decided to organize the preparatory process of the special session on the following basis:

(a) The Commission for Social Development, as the functional commission of the Economic and Social Council with the primary responsibility for follow-up to the Summit, would undertake work in 1999–2000 for the preparations of the special session, in accordance with its programme of work as set out in Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/7;

(b) A preparatory committee would be established, which would hold an organizational session in 1998; the committee would initiate its substantive activities in 1999 on the basis of inputs by the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council; it would also take into account contributions by other relevant organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system.

3. By its resolution 52/25, the Assembly decided to establish a Preparatory Committee open to the participation of all States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies, with the participation of observers in accordance with the established practice of the Assembly; it also decided that the Committee would hold an organizational session in May 1998.

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III. Main activities undertaken since May 1998

Preparatory Committee

4. The organizational session of the Preparatory Committee was held in New York from 19 to 22 May 1998. The Preparatory Committee adopted decisions on the objectives of the special session; issues to be addressed at future sessions of the Committee; coordination with the Commission for Social Development; the role of the United Nations system; the mobilization of voluntary resources; the participation of non-governmental organizations; and arrangements for future sessions; the Committee also decided on the dates of its two substantive sessions: 17–28 May 1999 and 3–14 April 2000, both in New York.[1]

Commission for Social Development

5. The Commission for Social Development held its thirty-seventh session in New York from 9 to 19 February 1999. In accordance with its multi-year programme of work, it considered the priority themes "Social services for all" and "Initiation of the overall review of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development". It adopted a set of agreed conclusions on the theme "Social services for all" and decided to transmit them to the Preparatory Committee at its first substantive session and to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1999.[2] The agreed conclusions contain analysis and recommendations for action to promote the efficient and effective delivery of social services for all as a contribution to overall social development. The Commission also recommended that the special session reinforce the commitments on education and health adopted at the World Summit for Social Development by considering national strategies and supportive international policies necessary for their achievement.[3]

6. With regard to its initiation of the overall review of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit, the Commission provided the first opportunity for a preliminary assessment of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit, and for a substantive discussion on possible issues and further initiatives to be considered by the special session. Having considered the reports of the Secretary-General (E/CN.5/1999/3 and E/CN.5/1999/4), the Commission adopted a resolution in which it invited Governments to provide additional inputs, in particular proposals concerning possible further initiatives, to the Preparatory Committee to facilitate the work at its first substantive session; it also requested the Secretary-General to update those reports before their presentation to the Committee so that they reflected the proposals and suggestions made during the discussions in the Commission, as well as any additional inputs submitted by Governments.[4] These reports are before the Committee at its present session (A/AC.253/7 and A/AC.253/8).

National reporting

7. Stressing the importance of national reporting, the Preparatory Committee requested the Secretary-General to formulate general guidelines and a structure and common framework for national reporting on the progress made and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the outcome of the Summit to assist in the preparation of a comprehensive report assessing the overall level of implementation of the outcome of the Summit, to be submitted to the Preparatory Committee at its second substantive session, in April 2000 (see decisions 2 and 3).[1] The guidelines were formulated by the Secretariat and sent to Governments in October 1998; responses from Governments are expected by the end of June 1999.

Assessment of global trends

8. The Preparatory Committee requested the Secretary-General to provide it and the special session with an up-to-date comprehensive assessment of global trends, through the *Report on the World Social Situation*, to be issued in time for the second substantive session of the Preparatory Committee, in April 2000. Work on this report is currently under way (decision 2).[1]

Role of the United Nations system

9. The Preparatory Committee reaffirmed that its substantive activities should take into account the results of other major United Nations conferences and contributions by other relevant organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, and invited them to contribute to and be actively involved in the preparatory process and the special session, by, *inter alia*, submitting proposals for further actions and initiatives (decision 4).[1]

10. In June 1998, after the organizational session of the Preparatory Committee, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs wrote to the heads of all the relevant specialized agencies, organizations, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions, drawing their attention to Committee decision 4 and requesting them to report on their activities in the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development[5] and the Programme of Action[6] and to

submit proposals for further actions and initiatives. Contributions received from these organizations are transmitted to the Preparatory Committee by a note by the Secretariat (A/AC.253/9 and addenda).

11. At the inter-agency level, briefings have been provided by the Secretariat on an ad hoc basis at inter-agency meetings; numerous bilateral meetings have been held and contacts made between the Secretariat and various organizations of the United Nations system on preparations for the special session and possible collaboration.

Participation of non-governmental organizations

12. Reaffirming the importance of the participation of non-governmental organizations and the involvement of civil society in the implementation of and follow-up to the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action, the Preparatory Committee, at its organizational session, adopted modalities for the participation of those organizations in its work (decision 7).[1]

13. According to those modalities, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and on the Roster would be invited to participate in the meetings of the Preparatory Committee; other non-governmental organizations that attended the World Summit for Social Development or other major United Nations conferences and summits would be invited to apply to the Committee for accreditation. The Secretariat has informed those non-governmental organizations that are eligible to participate in the work of the Committee and has invited others to apply for accreditation.

14. The modalities for the participation of non-governmental organizations in the special session will be considered by the Preparatory Committee at its present session (decision 7 (e)).[1]

Mobilization of voluntary resources

15. At its organizational session, the Preparatory Committee invited Governments to contribute to the Trust Fund for the Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development set up to support the participation of the least developed countries in the work of the Preparatory Committee and the special session and the organization of expert group meetings, seminars, symposia and workshops to be held by the Secretariat on issues of relevance to the special session (decision 5). Notes verbales were sent by the Secretary-General to Governments in June 1998 inviting them to contribute to the Trust Fund. As of the date of preparation of the present note, contributions to the Trust Fund had been received from the Governments of Cyprus, Denmark, the Netherlands, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and an offer to contribute had been received from the Government of Sweden.

Preparatory work carried out by the Secretariat

16. The Secretariat continues to organize seminars and workshops and to commission papers on topics that could be considered by the Preparatory Committee and the special session. Information on the outcome of those meetings as well as papers will be submitted to the Committee as background documents, to assist in the deliberations on the topics. Among the topics covered are: international economic and social justice; poverty reduction strategies; globalization and employment; paid and unpaid work; global barriers to the growth of employment; globalization and social policy; international tax competition; implementation and institutional reform; a rights approach to development; political and moral philosophy relevant to the implementation of the Social Summit commitments; impact of globalization on national revenue; priorities for national macro-policy; inefficiencies in international financial markets and their consequences for social development; and the management of national social security systems.

Arrangements for the special session

17. The Secretariat is working closely with the Government of Switzerland and holds continuous consultations and discussions on arrangements for the special session at the United Nations Office at Geneva and other relevant issues. Within the Secretariat, arrangements have been put in place for coordination among the various organizational units directly involved in the administrative and technical aspects of the preparations for the special session, including the United Nations Office at Geneva.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 45* (A/53/45), chap. VI, sect. B.

[2] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 6* (E/1999/26), chap. I, sect. D, resolution 37/1, annex.

[3] Ibid., resolution 37/1, annex, para. 41.

[4] Ibid., resolution 37/3.

[5] *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6–12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[6] Ibid., annex II.

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Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives
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Preliminary review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

Preliminary assessment of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

At its organizational session (19–22 May 1998), the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives decided that the task of the Committee is to review and appraise the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and to propose concrete actions and initiatives for further implementation of the Copenhagen commitments. The present report addresses the first task, and should be read in conjunction with document E/CN.5/1999/4, which was considered by the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-seventh session, in February 1999, and will be before the Preparatory Committee for its information. The present report contains updated information on implementation of each of the 10 commitments since December 1998.

A separate report on further initiatives for the implementation of the outcome of the Summit (A/AC.253/8) will also be before the Committee.

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I. Introduction

1. At its organizational session (19–22 May 1998), the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development,, in its decision 2 (b), requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its first session a report on the implementation of the 10 commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, including the three core issues, at the national, regional and international levels.

2. A report on the preliminary assessment of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit was submitted by the Secretary-General to the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-seventh session, in February 1999 (E/CN.5/1999/4). The Commission considered and took note with appreciation of the report, and requested the Secretary-General to update the report before its submission to the Committee at its first session, in May 1999, reflecting the proposals and suggestions made during the discussions in the Commission as well as any additional inputs submitted by Governments.

3. The present report has been prepared in response to that request. It contains updated information under each of the 10 commitments, and should therefore be read as an addendum to document E/CN.5/1999/4, which is also before the Committee.

II. Implementing the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development

Commitment 1. Creation of an enabling environment

Creating a favourable national and international political and legal environment

4. At its thirty-seventh session, the Commission for Social Development underscored the need to sustain social development efforts in the face of adverse economic conditions prevailing in many countries. It was recognized that social improvements must be an integral component of any effective development strategy at the national and international levels. It was also agreed that economic (including fiscal and monetary) policies pursued by Governments should support the attainment of social goals articulated at the Summit.

5. While Governments hold the primary responsibility for putting the vision of Copenhagen into practice, civil society and the private sector are important actors in facilitating the attainment of social targets. However, Governments must act through international, national, regional and local politics to create an enabling environment conducive to social development. The issue of government transparency and accountability has become a crucial element of the domestic social and political agenda.

6. The role of legislative bodies at all levels, including that of parliaments, is crucial for the implementation of social development policies and programmes. The Inter-Parliamentarian Union (IPU) sent questionnaires to all its members to ascertain the views of national parliaments on a number of specific issues relating to follow-up to the Summit at the national and international levels. The results of these responses were shared and discussed by representatives of parliaments, Governments and international organizations at the second IPU tripartite meeting, held in New York in March 1999. The meeting reviewed progress achieved in implementing the results of the Summit at the parliamentary level, discussed obstacles and successes, and identified and proposed further

initiatives to achieve the commitments made at Copenhagen. The report of the meeting will be made available to the Committee at its first session.

7. In the wake of global financial turmoil, there has been intensive analysis and reflection on the possible root causes of the crisis, particularly in the crisis-affected countries. The need to make governance systems more sound, accountable and transparent was recognized. Reform efforts in public policy have aimed at modifying the domestic institutional base and improving the responsiveness of Government to public needs and interests, including better prioritizing among these needs and interests. The efforts to achieve a substantial recovery envisioned the strengthening of the domestic "social compact", which includes broadening the policy dialogue between Government and other actors, including business and trade unions.

8. While ongoing efforts to reform the international financial architecture and improve economic management will reduce the risks of future crises, there is growing recognition of the need to proceed, in parallel, with efforts to strengthen social policies and institutions, including industrial relations systems and institutions for social dialogue. These measures are particularly important in countries that have recently made the transition from authoritarian political systems to democracy.

9. There has also been growing recognition in the crisis-affected countries that improving the institutional and legal framework, including a consistent campaign against corruption, extremism and organized crime, is essential for effective economic and social development. They will also have the benefit of decreasing the cost of foreign borrowing, as well as for attracting direct foreign investment again, since these have declined dramatically since the start of the Asian financial crisis. A stable and predictable environment in a host country is essential to increase confidence among foreign investors.

10. An important step in the fight against corruption and money-laundering has been the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions, which came into force in February 1999. Apart from the 29 OECD member States who are signatories to the Convention, five non-OECD countries have also joined (Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile and the Slovak Republic). Operating within a broad definition of corrupt practices, the Convention requires countries to impose sanctions on corporations or individuals who attempt to bribe foreign officials.[1] The United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention continues to implement the global programme against money laundering, advising Governments about the design and enforcement of programmes which help to combat illicit activities on a worldwide scale.

11. At the annual session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs held at Vienna in March 1999, an important decision was reached which aimed at enhancing the capabilities of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, through satellite monitoring, to assess illicit crops being cultivated in major drug-producing countries. Acquisition of satellite capability by the United Nations will provide the international community with modern and reliable tools to identify the areas of illicit drug cultivation, enabling Member States to stop narcotics production at its source. Apart from new monitoring opportunities, the use of satellite surveillance can foster better cooperation among Member States in their fight against drugs through the creation of a surveillance system based on a widely accepted uniform methodology.

[1] According to an OECD news release, Paris, December 1998.

12. Access to information is an essential attribute of a democratic society. Information empowers all partners in social development and increases public awareness. For example, the lack of adequate information was an impediment to the design of policies to ease the Asian financial crisis. At a regional meeting on social issues arising from the East Asia economic crisis and policy implications for the future, held at Bangkok in January 1999, a consensus was reached on the need for improved data collection, information sharing and coordination mechanisms among the crisis-affected countries. It was acknowledged that the existing monitoring system failed to provide quick and reliable information on social changes stemming from the economic crisis and was not cost-effective.

13. In the face of the specific needs of high-risk groups among refugee populations, particularly women and children, several specific programmes for social integration have been implemented by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). These include peace-building, assisting separated children and former child soldiers, education for girls, attempts to prevent sexual exploitation, and addressing the problems of adolescents as well as problems specific to women refugees.

Creating a favourable national and international economic environment

14. The global financial turmoil which affected many developing countries and economies in transition had enormous social costs, hurting tens of millions of ordinary citizens in a profound way. To protect the economic and social welfare of their populations, some countries were forced to take special measures, such as reimposing capital controls, while others began to reconsider the pace and scale of liberalization of their economies. One lesson of the crisis was that an appropriate international response was at least as important as identifying the best mix of macroeconomic policies at the national level.

15. A call for "new international financial architecture" to address the crisis-prone system of international finance has reflected, *inter alia*, the discrepancy between increasingly sophisticated and dynamic international financial markets and the lack of a proper institutional framework to regulate them.[2] Moreover, the speed and depth of the globalization process — which encompasses not only the financial, investment and trade spheres but also communication, tourism and culture — have confronted both national Governments and the international community with an urgent need to meet the new challenges to the social development agenda.

16. The ongoing debate about the shape of future institutional reforms has been enriched by specific proposals made by the international agencies. For example, the World Bank recently advocated a new "holistic" development framework integrating macroeconomic and financial considerations, on the one hand, and structural, institutional, social and human considerations on the other. Integration of these elements is imperative at the international level, as well as nationally. Since this integration of economic and social policies is a crucial factor in making the modern market economy work it should underpin the creation of any new financial architecture.[3] The International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration on

[2] See "Towards a new international financial architecture", report of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, New York, 21 January 1999.

[3] See James D. Wolfenson, "Comprehensive development framework: a discussion draft" (World Bank, 1999). According to the President of the World Bank, it is not just a matter of getting exchange rates right or fixing fiscal policy, important as they are. It is about putting in place the broad range of institutional underpinnings needed to make a market economy work, not forgetting those elements that protect the vulnerable and the weak (see "Foundations for a more stable global system: remarks on the symposium on global finance and development", accessed at http:/www.worldbank.org/htm/extdr/extme/jdwsp030199.htm).

Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work provides a sound basis for integrating social and labour concerns into the international development framework and the international financial architecture. The unacceptable and unsustainable social costs of recent financial crises have stimulated intensive discussion during the past months within the United Nations system, including the World Bank, on principles of good social policy to be applied at both national and international levels.

17. Despite numerous economic and social strains caused by the financial crisis, many developing countries have not abandoned their commitment to reform. For instance, in Latin America, reforms aimed at improving the structure of tax systems and eliminating incentives for tax evasion have been introduced or continued in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico. The privatization process has continued, although at a slower pace and with closer scrutiny in terms of potential gains. Labour market reforms, as well as reforms of retirement programmes, have also been undertaken by a number of countries of the region.[4]

18. However, a prolonged slump in commodity prices, coupled with overall weakening of the world demand for manufactured goods, remains a major threat to the economic recovery of many developing countries. Slower economic growth, in its turn, has been negatively affecting job creation and anti-poverty efforts. The economic slowdown has had very visible social repercussions, affecting lower-income groups in a particularly severe way. At the same time, there has been a growing recognition that while the restoration of robust economic growth is clearly an essential prerequisite in overcoming the after-effects of recession, Governments should not view social policy as a matter of secondary importance in relation to economic policy measures. The poor and vulnerable groups often require immediate assistance at a time when economic after-shocks may be felt for a substantial time. The need for public programmes specifically tailored to the circumstances of crisis-hit countries has become apparent. Similarly, prompt action in favour of social policy is less costly in both human and financial terms than delaying such action so that it follows rather than accompanies economic reform.

Commitment 2. Eradication of poverty

19. While overall living standards have increased dramatically over the last 25 years, three billion people are still living on less than $2 a day, with growing inequity between the rich and the poor.[5] World population has grown rapidly — from 3 billion people in 1960 to an estimated six billion now — and many have been born in and remain in poverty.[6]

20. If the goal set by the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD of halving absolute poverty by the year 2015 is to be achieved, then new responses are required. The follow-up process to the Summit is expected not only to *set* achievable goals but also to propose *how* these goals are to be realized. Strategies to eliminate poverty have focused on the following main directions: first, implementing macroeconomic policies which combine economic growth with greater equity in income distribution; second, promoting decent employment and incomes in both the formal and informal sector; third, ensuring access to affordable basic social services; fourth, putting in place social safety nets for vulnerable groups or those excluded from the labour market; and fifth, fostering organization, empowerment and participation of the poor to advance their best interests.

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[4] See Inter-American Development Bank, 1998 annual report (Washington, D.C., 1999).

[5] See World Bank, "A proposal for a comprehensive development framework", January 1999.

[6] Based on Department of Economic and Social Affairs data accessed at http://www.popin.org/pop1998/4.htm.

21. Recent financial crises demonstrated the close relationship between poverty and the rate of economic growth. In Indonesia, for example, where gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have fallen by 15 per cent in 1998, the numbers falling back into poverty, measured using a poverty line of $1.25 a day, is expected to more than double to about 56 million. Using poverty lines of $2 a day for Thailand and Malaysia and $1 a day for the Philippines, the World Bank estimates the increase in poverty to be 2.3 million in Thailand, 500,000 in Malaysia and 665,000 in the Philippines.[7]

22. It is instructive to juxtapose the current crisis with the impressive gains made by a number of Asian countries in poverty alleviation during the past decades. From 1975 to 1995, during two decades of sustained economic growth, the number of people living in poverty fell from 569 million to 269 million in China, from 87 million to 22 million in Indonesia, from 2.1 million to less than 200,000 in Malaysia and from 3.4 million to less than 500,000 in Thailand. The deterioration in both economic activity and equity is bringing poverty levels in most crises-affected Asian countries back to the levels of the early 1990s, eliminating the effects of 10 years of growth.[8] In fact, the impact of economic crisis may have an irreversible social impact, meaning that even when economic growth is restored, societies could be left permanently impaired due to malnutrition and lack of schooling. The financial crisis has had an uneven and destructive impact on different sections of society. Equally worrisome is that even when economic indicators improve, social recovery lags far behind.

23. Priority actions to protect the poor during crises include: allocation of income to the poor through direct cash transfers and labour-intensive public works for the unemployed; ensuring food supplies through direct transfers and price subsidization of essential commodities; preserving the human capital of the poor through programmes in health, nutrition and education; and providing training opportunities, job search assistance and self-employment opportunities supported by micro-credit schemes.[9]

24. Such programmes must take into account the distinct needs of different social groups if they are to achieve the desired impact. Evidence indicates that national crisis-relief measures in East Asian countries, such as public works, have disadvantaged women. In some public works schemes, there has been little enforcement of women's right to work and participate alongside men. Similar patterns have been observed in other income maintenance schemes.[10]

25. Taking into account lessons learned during the crisis, some countries of the region have initiated a programme of financial support for small and medium enterprises as a poverty reduction tool to improve the informal sector employment-generation capacity. Malaysia, for example, set up Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM), a microfinance institution, funded by the government agencies. Since the outbreak of crisis, AIM has increased the number of loans by about 21 per cent and its loan volume by 67 per cent.[11]

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[7] See World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects and the Developing Countries, 1998/1999: Beyond Financial Crisis* (1999).

[8] Ibid.

[9] See World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects* ....

[10] See World Bank, "Employment generation and income maintenance: social impact of the Asia crisis", draft, January 1999; accessed at http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/eacrisis/library/soccimplp2.htm.

[11] See World Bank, "Microfinance institutions/small and medium enterprises: social impact of the East Asian crisis", draft, January 1999, accessed at http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/eacrisis/library/soccimplp3.htm.

26. The reasons for Asia's strong past record in poverty alleviation do not lie in economic growth alone. Strong growth was accompanied and indeed preceded by a relatively equal distribution of income, and policies to invest in education, health services, rural development and labour-intensive growth. In regions where income distribution is more unequal and investment in human capital is minimal, economic growth is less likely to result in substantial declines in poverty. The fact that economic crisis and attempted adjustment in Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America have resulted in greater income inequality during the post-crisis period[12] leads to a legitimate concern that poverty and inequality will likewise increase in the aftermath of the Asian crisis.

27. At the international level, apart from the urgent financial support for the crisis-hit countries, attention has been focused on the weaknesses of poverty monitoring framework and of the impact-assessment capability of national and international institutions. At a regional meeting on the East Asia economic crisis (Bangkok, January 1999), (see para. 12 above), it was concluded that priority should be placed on monitoring the irreversible effects of the crisis, such as increased malnutrition, loss of employment, school drop-outs and sale of land and other assets; and priority should be placed on identifying the most vulnerable groups in each country, such as ethnic minorities, disabled population, illegal migrants and workers in the informal sector.[13]

28. Poverty is multidimensional and must be evaluated not only in terms of levels of income and wealth alone but also in terms of social welfare, as measured by school enrolment, adult literacy, life expectancy, child mortality and access to safe water and health services. While most countries have made strong improvements in all of these areas, a number have regressed, showing that progress in poverty alleviation is far from automatic and requires a combination of political will, social stability and additional resources. For example, while school enrolment rates for developing countries have increased from 46 to 57 per cent between 1980 and 1995, they have dropped or remained stagnant in 18 middle and low-income countries. Many of the countries which have seen a deterioration of social welfare have cut back funding for social services due to economic reform, or have been subject to armed conflict and political unrest. The latter factors show that poverty cannot be solved by economic growth alone: sustainable solutions must also take into account cultural, social, political and ethnic dimensions.

29. Despite the fact that the majority of the world's poor still live in rural areas, the rapid urbanization of the developing world has raised awareness of the problems associated with urban poverty, including increasing levels of slum housing, unprotected and informal employment, street children and child labour, crime, drug abuse and homelessness. Urban poverty affects countries at all levels of development, albeit in different ways and scope. A number of initiatives to combat urban poverty are being taken by the United Nations system, in collaboration with municipal governments, civil society and bilateral development organizations. Two major international meetings on urban poverty were held at Recife, Brazil, and Florence, Italy, in 1996 and 1997 under the auspices of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and a number of other partners. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has also assisted in supporting a world alliance of cities against poverty, which held its first major international meeting at Lyon in October 1998.

30. The World Bank proposal for a comprehensive development framework (see para. 16 above), released in January 1999, addresses prerequisites for poverty alleviation and sustainable development through a matrix of specific actors and interventions involving

[12] See World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects* ....

[13] Based on information accessed at http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/eacrisis/meeting/group1.htm.

structural, human, physical and sector-specific strategies. This framework is seen to be a necessary complement to macroeconomic considerations, and places strong emphasis on participation and partnership.

Commitment 3. Promotion of full employment

31. Four years have elapsed since the international community committed itself to promote the goal of full employment as a basic priority of economic and social policies. However, the world employment situation remains grim, with over 150 million workers unemployed and with an additional 25 to 30 per cent of the world labour force of three billion people underemployed.[14]

32. In recent years, a number of African economies have made a fragile recovery from a protracted period of stagnation. However, with growth of output in Africa projected to slow to about 2 per cent in 1999 — below the level of population growth — this modest recovery is already being threatened by international financial crises, declining commodity prices and regional conflicts. Furthermore, employment growth in Africa has not kept pace with new entrants to the labour force and most of the new jobs have been created in the informal economy, which is plagued by low productivity and underemployment. Although Latin America's economic performance improved in 1996–1997, unemployment rates remained high, with a growing proportion of non-agricultural employment in the informal sector. Despite moderate economic growth in the industrialized economies, overall unemployment rates have been close to 8 per cent and above 10 per cent for the European Union. For the OECD countries, the unemployment rate is expected to fall only very slowly through 1999 to about 7 per cent, with more than 35 million job seekers. Open unemployment continues to be high in the transitional economies, and the situation is exacerbated in some cases by a growing number of drop-outs from the labour market altogether. Finally, the Asian financial crisis which started in Thailand in July 1997 and soon spread to other newly industrialized countries in South-East and East Asia has underscored the vulnerability of these once high growth and full employment economies, where unemployment rates have doubled and even tripled in the space of a few months. Therefore, while employment creation remains a high priority of countries throughout the world, much remains to be done to put these policies into practice.

33. A number of major international meetings continue to emphasize the centrality of employment to national and international social and economic policy. The Group of Eight Major Industrialized Countries Conference of Ministers of Labour, meeting at Washington, D.C., in February 1999, considered the theme "Labour policies in a rapidly changing global economy". The ministers agreed that global economic growth must take place under conditions of social justice and called for the universal respect of core labour standards. The Conference advocated strategies that support employability, promote entrepreneurship, enhance the adaptability of workers and firms, and ensure equal opportunities for men and women to participate in the world of work. These strategies require the integration of employment policies at the national and international levels. The ministers also saw the need to make better use of international organizations to help establish the labour market institutions and strong safety nets necessary to enhance growth, employment and social cohesion.

[14] See ILO, *World Employment Report 1998–1999, Employability in the Global Economy: How Training Matters* (Geneva, 1998); and Eddy Lee, *The Asian Financial Crisis* (Geneva, International Labour Organization, 1998).

34. Similarly, the heads of State and Government of the Group of Fifteen, meeting for their ninth summit in Jamaica in February 1999, called upon the ILO to launch a comprehensive employment strategy at the ministerial level later in 1999. They furthermore resolved to collaborate with all social partners in the ILO tripartite framework to achieve this objective. An employment strategy, including the right to work, should strengthen respect for internationally recognized fundamental ILO conventions on workers rights.

35. The ILO will convene the Second Enterprise Forum in November 1999. This Forum will bring together representatives from employers' and workers' organizations to examine the changing market place, human resource-based competitive strategies, corporate citizenship and social initiatives, and tapping the employment potential of small enterprises. This Forum, with its broad-based participation of economic actors from the private and public sectors and civil society can be expected to provide inputs into Summit follow-up in the fields of employment generation, social initiatives and codes of conduct for the private sector.

36. The ILO has organized between January and March 1999 a series of four regional consultations (Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Western Europe and Africa) on the follow-up to the Summit, with a fifth consultation for the Arab region planned for September 1999. These consultations, which included social partners and observers from international financial institutions, synthesized the findings and drew lessons from a series of country employment policy reviews. The country employment reviews are intended to help countries give substance to their Summit commitment on employment through an appropriate choice of economic and social policies and through the establishment of efficient social institutions and the necessary legal framework. The focus of discussion has been on the role of enterprises in job creation, investment in human resource development and workforce skills to enhance employability, employment policy and gender equity, and policy and institutional reform to promote full employment and social protection within the framework of globalization. These regional meetings will feed into an international consultation on follow-up to the Summit, to be held at Geneva from 2 to 4 November 1999.

37. Youth unemployment has become a major policy concern for countries at all levels of development, which now recognize that it is not a transitional phenomenon. Prolonged spells of unemployment in early adult life are likely to have negative consequences for both the individual and society at large. Unemployment among the young is also closely related to crime, drug abuse and social unrest. The 1998 International Labour Conference adopted a resolution on youth employment which calls for an international strategy for youth employment, creating a database on youth employment and disseminating best practice information and research on employment initiatives for youth. OECD organized a conference on the theme "Preparing youth for the twenty-first century: policy lessons from the past" (Washington, D.C., February 1999). The meeting addressed the problems facing young people entering the labour market, and reviewed the current policies directed at aiding them to find and stay in work.

38. The ILO *World Employment Report 1998–1999* focuses on training and employability in the global economy. The report argues that competitiveness in the global economy requires investments in high value-added and knowledge-intensive sectors, with a commensurate need to invest in education and skills of the workforce. Special measures are required to increase the employability of vulnerable groups, including youth, the long-term unemployed, older displaced workers and workers with disabilities.

39. Also, the continued growth of the informal economy in many developing, transitional and even industrialized countries requires new policies — in training, credit and institutional support — to increase productivity, incomes and social protection in this sector. Whereas

the informal sector can be seen as offering alternative employment opportunities not available in the formal sector, a type of employer of last resort, it is often characterized by low productivity and pay and exploitative working conditions. The recent financial crisis in Asian countries, such as Thailand and Indonesia, has highlighted the l ed capacity of the informal sector, once viewed as a traditional social safety net, to provide retrenched workers and new entrants to the labour market with productive employment. Trade unions, local governments and other civil society actors are increasingly concerned by the growth of informal forms of employment, and are working in partnership to help organize informal sector workers and to develop a more supportive regulatory environment to improve their incomes and working conditions. Further actions are required to assist emerging informal sector organizations in gaining access to existing support structures, improving social protection for their members and taking greater advantage of new business opportunities. The entire legal and regulatory environment governing the informal sector, in fact, needs to be reformed with the aim of recognizing, mainstreaming and indeed promoting self-employment and the small-scale, informal private sector.

40. The work of the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries (OSCAL) is most relevant in this respect, trying to put the informal sector high on the policy agenda of African Governments. In 1997, an international and heterogenous informal sector task force initiated by OSCAL formulated and adopted a special support programme for the informal sector in Africa. Recently accompanied by action programme for poverty reduction through the promotion of the informal sector and employment, OSCAL convened an expert meeting at Banjul in December 1998 to devise strategies to improve productivity and competitiveness in the informal sector in Africa. In particular, lessons from Asia were drawn relating to policy reform and concrete ways to support informal sector units.

41. A number of countries at all levels of development have embraced public or community works programmes as a social safety net for retrenched or displaced workers following financial crises, economic reform or man-made or natural disasters. Whereas the emphasis is often placed on emergency employment creation, such programmes have provided the opportunity to transform safety nets into springboards for sustainable development. To do so, they must put a premium on cost-effective and high quality infrastructure, involve partnerships between the private and public sectors, and provide management and technical training to foster productivity and sound working conditions.

Commitment 4. Promotion of social integration

42. As indicated in document E/CN.5/1999/4, many countries have taken steps after the Summi to promote and enhance social integration. By its nature, social integration is a long-term endeavour. National implementation activities in this area are an ongoing process, often focused on translating either constitutional or recently adopted political commitments to equity and equality of opportunity into specific laws, regulations, support programmes, educational and awareness campaigns and other actions. In the wake of the financial crisis, increased attention has been given to the creation of mechanisms that could prevent social disruptions or marginalization caused by economic shocks, particularly by devising some safety net schemes which are better suited to adverse economic conditions.

43. However, in the context of the Copenhagen vision that the aim of social integration is to create "a society for all" in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play, there was a shift in thinking in this area in connection with the issue of social services as manifested at the thirty-seventh session of the Commission for Social Development. This paradigm shift underlines the move from a "safety net" to a

"springboard" approach, i.e., a move from a system which merely provides assistance to people in need towards a system which seeks to empower people. It is within this context that programmes and activities for social integration should be conceived and effectiveness measured. In this vein, the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission at its thirty-seventh session state that the major objective of social services is to contribute to and facilitate greater equity and equality of opportunities for every member of society in order to promote the strengthening of social cohesion and avoid social exclusion. Social services and all other action to promote social integration are therefore important and beneficial to the entire society and not just to the people who derive direct or identifiable support from them. Thus, for example, a society aims to have educated, healthy children for its own sake as well as for theirs.

44. It has been widely recognized, nationally and internationally, that the existence of strong and transparent institutions is a prerequisite for an inclusive society based on the rule of law, respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, cultural and religious diversity, social justice and democratic participation, which takes into account the special needs of vulnerable and disadvantages groups. Effective social, political and legal institutions, respected by all and serving all members of society equally and fairly are not only essential components of a well-integrated society but also an important venue as well as communication channel for various groups with different interests to avoid conflicts and achieve mutual respect and harmony. The role of institutions is also crucial in implementing some redistribution of the fruits of economic growth which all societies undertake in order to achieve better social cohesion and equity.

45. In the face of demographic shifts and a growing proportion of older persons in the population structure of many countries, the issue of sustaining social cohesion between generations has become increasingly important. Through gradually changing pension systems and welfare programmes, some countries strive to provide a framework that would make adjustments to new demographic realities less painful for the society at large. In other cases, measures to remove bottlenecks in youth employment, introduction of employment-sharing schemes and other work arrangements aimed at increasing the flexibility of the labour market as well as widening employment options have sought to minimize the number of people falling into social marginalization. The effectiveness of these measures in terms of social integration and equity considerations varies from country to country. In some cases, inequality in earnings/wages and consequently disparity in household incomes has increased, while unemployment rates have stayed at historically high levels. One corollary is that labour market mechanisms need to be constantly perfected in order to remain an effective tool of social inclusion.

46. Numerous recent meetings at the United Nations and other international forums have paid special attention to the social aspect of globalization, including its actual or potential marginalizing effects on countries and individuals. The need for giving a higher priority to combating inequality, inequity and exclusion in the context of globalization has been recognized by the World Bank as one of most important development challenges of our time. In the same vein, the Chair of the OECD Development Assistance Committee, in the most recent 1998 report on development cooperation, observed that globalization that marginalizes many individuals and entire regions of the world, including regions with the fastest population growth, risks exacerbating already disturbing inequalities in wealth and income between countries and within countries, and hampering the fight against poverty.[15]

[15] See OECD, "Development cooperation: efforts and polices of the members of the Development Assistance Committee" (OECD, Paris, 1999).

These developments create new complexities which render appropriate policy-making much more difficult to achieve without reducing the urgency of the task itself.

Commitment 5. Achievement of equality and equity between women and men

47. Given the central role of the gender dimension in development, a systematic review of the achievements made in gender equality in relation to each of the commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration will contribute to advancing the goal of gender equality.

48. It is now recognized that redressing gender inequality will require significant new conceptual and practical approaches in order to mainstream gender equality at the levels of formulation and implementation of projects and programmes. One major institutional change in society that is required for ultimate gender equality is universal access to education for girls. Given the significant gender dimension of poverty, it will not be possible to achieve poverty alleviation or human development without gender-sensitive policies at the highest level of government.

49. At its thirty-seventh session, in considering the topic of social services for all, the Commission for Social Development reiterated that the elimination of discrimination against women and the empowerment and full participation of women in all areas of life and at all levels should be priority objectives at the national as well as the international levels, and an intrinsic part of social development. It also agreed that social services should be gender-sensitive and designed to take into account and serve the specific needs of girls and women. Public agencies and non-governmental organizations should involve women at all stages of decision-making in the planning, management and delivery of social services. Women, especially in developing countries, often bear the negative consequences and the brunt of responsibilities resulting from a lack of social service provision. Policies should recognize their contributions and provide them support in these roles.

50. There is ample evidence that the causes and experiences of poverty are different for men and women. Whether it be in terms of food and nutrition, infant mortality, education or child-rearing responsibilities, there are great burdens on women. Therefore, in order to effectively integrate the perspective of women in the formulation and implementation of development plans, policies and programmes, ways must be found to empower women at all levels of government and civil society. In some countries of South Asia and in Europe, efforts have been made to implement institutional change in order to give substantial voice to women. In Bangladesh, for example, 10 per cent of nominated parliamentarians are women. In India, a move is current to introduce a quota of 30 per cent for women members of the Parliament. The Nordic countries, which impose a gender ratio of 40/60, require that no party give less than 40 per cent of seats to either gender.

51. At its forty-third session, the Commission on the Status of Women gave priority consideration to the need to improve women's health and to strengthening institutional mechanisms to promote equality and equity between women and men. The agreed conclusions of the meeting reaffirmed, *inter alia*, that universal access to quality, comprehensive and affordable health care, including reproductive and sexual health of women throughout the life cycle, are essential requirements for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Given the fact that the incidence of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) is a major concern of the global community, the international and national communities have been called upon to support public education and advocacy and to secure the highest level of political commitment. The goal of prevention, research, care and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS should be given priority attention. The Commission also emphasized that in order to make a significant impact in improving the health status of women, major efforts will

be required to bridge the gap between commitment and implementation, formulate policies favourable to investment in women's health and intensify efforts to meet the targets identified in the Beijing Platform for Action.

52. With regard to institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, the Commission recognized that gender mainstreaming is a tool for effective policy-making at all levels and not a substitute for targeted, woman-specific policies and programmes. National Governments have been called upon to provide strong political commitment to strengthen national machineries at the highest possible level of Government, including allocation of the necessary financial and human resources.

53. Many countries have put in place a monitoring mechanism in order to follow progress made in achieving gender equality. Developing effective indicators for gender equality is a major challenge for these countries. Such indicators should provide facts and trends in an objective and analytical fashion in order to serve the countries in formulating and implementing projects and programmes that will mainstream gender in the most equitable fashion possible.

54. In the area of employment, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), an international network of womens' organizations, academics and development workers, held their first meeting at Ottawa from 12 to 14 April 1999. WIEGO is supporting better organization, incomes and social protection of women employed in the informal economy throughout the world. The meeting addressed such issues as urban policies for the informal sector, global markets and home-based workers, informal sector statistics and social insurance.

Commitment 6. Access to health and education services

55. In 1998, the World Health Assembly endorsed the new global health policy "Health for all in the twenty-first century" which is a continuation of the "Health for all" initiative and is aimed at meeting the major challenges in health during the next decades. This initiative, developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in consultation with all its national and international partners, involved member countries, United Nations organizations, the academic and research community and a wide variety of non-governmental organizations. In recognizing health's contribution to development, the initiative also reflects the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences, including the World Summit for Social Development. The goals of the initiative include an increase in life expectancy and the quality of life for all; improved equity in health between and within countries; and access for all to sustainable health systems and services. It includes strengthened support for four key values: human rights, equity, ethics and gender sensitivity.

56. Time-bound global health targets were set for health equity; survival (maternal mortality rates, child mortality rates); eradication and elimination of certain diseases; reversing global trends of major pandemics; improving access to water, sanitation, food and shelter; development and implementation of national "Health for all" policies; improved access to essential health care; implementation of global and national surveillance systems; strengthening health information systems; and supporting research for health. Specific indicators will be chosen to measure progress towards achievement of the targets. Regional and national targets are also envisaged within the framework of the global policy. Selected targets include economic well-being and poverty reduction; social development, including primary education and gender equality; and environmental sustainability. To implement

the goals and targets of the initiative, action will be undertaken at the global, regional, national and local levels.[16]

57. Among major health concerns, tobacco is predicted to be one of the leading causes of disease burden in the next century. According to WHO estimates, there are currently 3.5 million deaths a year from tobacco-related diseases, which are expected to increase to about 10 million by 2020. Some 70 per cent of those deaths will occur in developing countries. WHO has established a project, the "Tobacco-free initiative", to coordinate a global strategy response to tobacco as an important health issue. The long-term mission of global tobacco control is to reduce smoking prevalence and tobacco consumption in all countries. WHO is working with the World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other partners to strengthen control and taxation polices and initiate a ban on advertising. Early in 1999 at the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland, the Director-General of WHO announced a new anti-tobacco partnership project in the European region with three major pharmaceutical companies. This project is open to both private, non-commercial and public sector partners.

58. A need to forge better partnerships between international organizations and the private sector in the field of health has been underscored by recent findings about a highly skewed pattern of health research in the world. According to the Geneva-based Global Forum for Health Research, less than 10 per cent of the $56 billion allocated annually to medical research in the world is aimed at the health problems which affect 90 per cent of the world's population.[17] For example, while pneumonia, diarrhoea, tuberculosis and malaria account for more than 20 per cent of the disease burden of the world, they receive less than 1 per cent of the resources allocated to health research.[18] The poor commercial prospects for development of some drugs, which are in great demand in many low-income countries (for example, anti-malaria drugs) are a disincentive to research funded by pharmaceutical companies based largely in developed countries. When there is an obvious market failure, research partnerships involving funds from various sources are not only desirable but necessary. These partnerships will represent a concrete step towards achieving the major goals set by the international community, namely eradicating, eliminating or controlling major diseases constituting global health problems, in accordance with paragraph 6.21 of Agenda 21, and reducing malaria mortality and morbidity by at least 20 per cent compared to 1995 levels in at least 75 per cent of affected countries, as reiterated in the Copenhagen Programme of Action.

59. Recognizing that current plans and actions are insufficient to control the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, in particular in Africa, the Secretariat of the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and its co-sponsors (UNICEF, UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), WHO and the World Bank) created in early 1999 the International Partnership Against HIV/AIDS in Africa. The overarching goal of the Partnership is aimed at urgently mobilizing Governments and civil societies to redirect national and international policies and resources towards addressing this evolving epidemic in the African region and its many implications. The core actions include youth education and mobilization, voluntary counselling and testing, community standards of care and treatment of people with HIV/AIDS, and special services for families with orphans.

[16] See WHO, proceedings of the Fifty-first World Health Assembly, May 1999.

[17] See *The 10/90 Report on Health Research 1999* (Geneva, Global Forum for Health Research, 1999).

[18] Ibid.

60. In the area of education, the East Asian crisis is having a profound impact. Families tend to withdraw their children from school due to declining incomes and inability to pay school fees. Falling enrolment and rising drop-out rates are observed. A preliminary survey in Indonesia shows that overall enrolment at the junior secondary school level has fallen by 2.3 per cent in 1998/99, and by the much larger level of 6.2 per cent in urban areas. Enrolments for girls entering first grade junior secondary school at Jakarta saw even greater declines (by 19 per cent). The Government has sharply increased basic education spending during this time of economic crisis. The basic education budget for 1989/99 increased in real terms by 55 per cent. To achieve the increase for basic education, allocations for other education subsectors have been reduced. The Government has launched a $390 million "Stay in school" national campaign to provide scholarships to about 2.5 million of the poorest junior secondary students. In Thailand, a special study conducted by UNICEF indicates that attendance has fallen. A large share of drop-outs are leaving the system at the transition points to higher levels of schooling.[19] The highly subsidized student loan has been doubled and additional grant scholarships are being made available. In addition, public schools are allowing students to continue in school without paying fees. In the Philippines, greater emphasis has been placed on increasing the shares of government funding to education, and on improving educational quality.

61. At its thirty-seventh session, the Commission for Social Development adopted a set of agreed conclusions on social services for all, which reiterated the time-bound targets set by the Summit in achieving universal primary education by the year 2015, and for improvements in infant, child and maternal mortality and in life expectancy. The Commission agreed that achievement of these commitments requires substantial improvement in access, delivery, quality and financing of social services, and recommended that the General Assembly at its special session reinforce those commitments by considering national strategies and supportive international policies necessary for their achievement.

62. The global exercise to assess the progress made in basic education during the 1990s is continuing. Since the launching of the "Education for all 2000 assessment" was launched last year, groups have been set up in all regions to organize regional assessment activities and mobilize and assist this process at the country level. Currently, some 50 countries have launched national assessments. The worldwide review of basic education will include also thematic studies on educational issues of global concern and case studies on the literacy and educational attainment of young people and adults. Surveys of the conditions of teaching and learning in primary schools are planned for a number of developing countries.[20]

63. An ad hoc inter-agency meeting on basic education and social development was held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on 15 and 16 December 1998. The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange views and information on the 2000 assessment of basic education and review of the outcome of the Summit, and identify areas of future cooperation and synergy. UNESCO will present a report on the assessment to the Committee at its second session in the year 2000, which will evaluate progress in the area of education and will also be useful in identifying further international action in support of the goals.

[19] See World Bank, "Thailand social monitor: challenge for social reform", January 1999.

[20] See UNESCO, *EFA 2000*, No. 34, January–March 1999.

Commitment 7. Acceleration of development in Africa and in the least developed countries

64. Despite the improved economic performance of a number of African countries over the past few years, many countries in the region are affected by external and internal shocks which seriously inhibit growth. External factors include the East Asian crisis, the effects of El Niño on eastern Africa, weak commodity prices and high debt, while political instability, corruption and a resurgence of conflicts in several countries continue to pose a major threat to sustained economic growth and development in the region. According to the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), improved growth of GDP in African countries since the Summit has not generally been matched by recovery of expenditure or quality in the social sectors, such as education and health care.

65. The East Asian crisis has impacted negatively on Africa's largest oil exporters (Nigeria, Angola and Gabon). These countries are experiencing a deterioration in their terms of trade and a fall in fiscal receipts as a result of lower oil related revenues following the fall in the world demand for oil. The picture is equally gloomy for non-oil exporters, who depend largely on export earnings from agricultural commodities, such as cocoa, coffee, cotton and groundnuts, whose prices have also sharply fallen. Many of the exporters of these commodities have suffered large falls in their income and earnings. Real GDP per capita in sub-Saharan Africa fell by an average 0.2 per cent during the period 1991–1997, and is estimated to have fallen an additional 0.5 per cent in 1998. Current forecasts foresee only a small 1.0 per cent average annual growth for the period from 1998 to 2000.[21]

66. Foreign direct investment, which had grown to about $4 billion in 1997 and is directed mainly to the minerals and metals sector, is likely to decline in response to falling commodity prices and to the shrinking profitability of firms in industrial countries as the world economy slows. Since only a small increase in investment as a share of GDP is projected for the region, leaving Africa with the lowest investment share in GDP among developing countries, efforts to improve output will have to come from greater efficiency in resource use.

67. One means for achieving greater efficiency in resource utilization is through the adoption of employment-intensive methods for investments in basic infrastructure. A number of African countries are adopting such methods for investments, such as rural access roads, afforestation, land restoration, agricultural development, slum improvement and urban upgrading schemes, which specifically benefit the poor. Research from operational programmes has shown these technologies to be both cost-effective and of high quality when compared with machine-based methods provided that they are undertaken with good working conditions, appropriate light equipment and supported by technical and management training. Furthermore, labour-intensive public works can be effective for creating employment and productive infrastructure not only in situations linked to war, natural disasters or economic emergencies but also in a variety of regular investment programmes which can provide sustainable employment to those working in agriculture or in the informal economy. In order to maximize the employment impact of infrastructure investments, a number of African Governments, including those of Uganda, Guinea, Madagascar, Senegal and Togo, are planning to set up labour-based policy promotion units. Such units would be established within ministries responsible for investment decisions but would have steering committees, including the labour ministry and representatives from employer and worker organizations.

[21] See World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects ...* .

68. As indicated by document E/CN.5/1999/4, the inherent weaknesses in African and other least developed country economies continue to pose a serious constraint to sustained economic growth and development. These include low savings and investments; underdeveloped markets; the decline in manufacturing output due to sagging domestic demand; the heavy debt burden; the continued decline in official development assistance (ODA) and marginalization in world trade. In view of this, the 1997 report on Africa prepared by OSCAL has called attention to the critical issues that continue to affect the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN–NADAF). These include the negative effects of globalization, the need to enhance coordination of efforts in the mobilization of financial resources, the diversification of Africa's economies, and the harmonization of various multilateral and bilateral initiatives on Africa.

69. At the regional level, United Nations agencies and other partners continue to contribute to the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments for the acceleration of development in Africa. In that connection, ECA and UNDP have for the first time since the Summit jointly organized two subregional follow-up conferences to the Summit (Nairobi, 15–17 March 1999, for countries in eastern and southern Africa; and Marrakech, Morocco, 23–25 March 1999, for North African countries), to take stock of progress made since Copenhagen and advance the commonly agreed social development goals in the region. These conferences brought together government ministers, representatives from subregional and non-governmental organizations, bilateral development partners and multilateral institutions, and others. Participants examined progress made by African countries in four main areas: poverty reduction; employment creation; the provision of social services for all; and governance. They also looked into further efforts towards meeting the goals set by the Summit. Other related issues discussed included the need for Governments to place poverty eradication at the top of the national agenda; the debt burden; women's access to and control of productive assets, such as land and credit; and enhancing the human capital of the poor by ensuring their access to basic health care, education, nutrition, productive employment and sustainable livelihoods.

Commitment 8. Inclusion of social development goals in structural adjustment programmes

70. It is now generally accepted that the process of adjustment has failed to reconcile the objectives of adjustment with the needs of the most vulnerable socio-economic groups in many countries undergoing structural adjustment. As noted in document E/CN.5/1999/4, although the multilateral financial institutions have acknowledged the importance of protecting or compensating the poor for the adverse effects of adjustment measures, the poor nevertheless continue to bear the brunt of hardships arising from macroeconomic and structural adjustment.

71. There is therefore a need, as was emphasized at the thirty-seventh session of the Commission for Social Development, for closer international cooperation and assistance to countries' ability to provide universal access to social services. Most important, as reflected in the Copenhagen Programme of Action, is the effort to foster an enabling international environment for social development. Such an environment should create conditions in which all countries can experience economic growth that can in turn generate resources for the provision of social services. More immediate and direct assistance can also be provided to strengthen the supply of resources available for service provision, including alleviating debt burdens for developing countries and increasing official development assistance to reach agreed targets.

72. The Commission reaffirmed the importance of adopting more socially sensitive approaches to structural adjustment, and encouraged efforts to integrate a social perspective into structural adjustment programmes. It agreed that stabilization and structural adjustment packages must pay attention to social needs and the provision of safety nets for the most vulnerable and marginalized.

73. Activities have been undertaken to improve the capacity of social partners to be better informed and better prepared to discuss and negotiate the different aspects of structural adjustment policies. National and regional seminars have taken place under ILO auspices, indicating the priorities for trade unions and employer organizations and the necessity for countries engaged in structural adjustment processes to set up tripartite institutions which would allow social partners to negotiate on structural adjustment policies.

74. The Bretton Woods institutions have supported greater openness, including civil society and social partners, in the policy dialogue on structural adjustment policies. Recent policy statements by the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Senior Vice-President for Development Economics of the World Bank reflect these concerns, and in a number of countries a fruitful collaboration with representatives of Bretton Woods institutions has taken place. However, further sensitization to the social impact of economic reform remains a need for those — both from international and bilateral financial institutions — advocating and implementing structural adjustment programmes. This is complicated by the fact that in most countries the discussion on adjustment is channelled through the ministries of finance and economic affairs, which often have too little contact or exchange with labour and other social ministries. Hence, there is a need to increase the capacity of these ministries responsible for social sectors in the intra-governmental dialogue on structural adjustment.

75. As regards the employment content of structural adjustment, various studies have been undertaken for Africa, Latin America and Asia, as well as in Eastern Europe, emphasizing the need for proactive measures in terms of fiscal, investment, industrial and trade policies in order to increase the employment content of structural adjustment. Regarding the decline in social services and other social impacts of structural adjustment, the ILO has continued, through its advocacy of programmes of employment intensive work, to improve the situation of the workers affected by structural adjustment programmes. Special attention has been given to women who are often the first victims of large-scale economic reform processes due to their dual roles as income earners and caretakers. Women are often called upon to supplement declining family income at times of crisis and to care for children when schooling and health infrastructure is deteriorating, and hence more attention from the family is demanded.

76. A subregional meeting was organized by ILO on economic reform, employment and the role of the social partners at Dakar in April 1998. The meeting included trade union and employer organizations, as well as representatives of ministries of labour and finance and academics. The participants looked at the impact of economic reforms on labour issues and discussed how the participation of social partners and civil society could make the reform process more sustainable, leading to a better distribution of its fruits.

Commitment 9. Allocation of resources for social development

77. At its thirty-seventh session, the Commission for Social Development reiterated the need to augment the resource base for social development at national and international levels, as well as to increase efficiency in the use of available funds. It was recognized that insufficient funding of social projects is an impediment to achieving a close integration of economic and social objectives. In the face of acute budgetary constraints in many

developing countries and transition economies, intensified by the worldwide financial crisis, efforts to improve financing of the social sector must be seen in the perspective of a host of competing claims upon national treasuries.

78. The Commission also underscored that enhanced financing of social development requires a strong political commitment by the international community, as well as well focused efforts to mobilize human and financial resources. Aside from the mobilization of domestic and international financial resources, effective implementation must be based on comprehensive strategic thinking, including a clear identification of capacities and constraints at national and international levels. In many countries, particularly in those with low incomes, there is a clear need to strengthen institutional capacity to implement the assistance programmes. Within the national context, the overall national commitment to achieve higher socio-economic targets is often crucial in order to enable the translation of poverty eradication objectives and other goals into country activities. An effective use of resources, along with a capability assessment of stakeholders in the development process, will help in addressing the challenges brought about by the fiscal squeeze and budgetary shortfalls which many countries have been experiencing. For example, one innovative means to stretch limited development resources further is to adopt employment-intensive technologies for infrastructure investments. Research and operational programmes in developing countries have shown that a variety of basic infrastructure, often of direct benefit to the poor, lend themselves to labour-intensive methods and can be implemented in a cost-effective and high-quality fashion. Such policies therefore increase impact on employment and poverty alleviation within the constraint of available resources.

79. The availability of adequate funds for social development remains a critical issue. The international community has an important stake in assisting developing countries in reducing the scale of poverty and deprivation through development cooperation. In particular, urgent donor efforts are needed to improve the socio-economic situation in the poorest developing countries. Confronting reduced aid flows amid falling commodity prices and decreased export earnings, these countries have limited access to private financial resources. Moreover, in the wake of the financial crisis, greater financial reward is demanded by private investors for lending to many developing countries due to perceived higher risks, creating additional financial constraints on growth.

80. As indicated in document E/CN.5/1999/4, ODA has been an important source of resources for supporting social development in recipient countries. The report also provided some preliminary estimates of ODA flows from donor countries to recipient countries in 1997. Updated statistical data released by the OECD Development Assistance Committee in February 1999 shows that since 1992, overall flows of ODA have fallen by more than 20 per cent in real terms. Measured as a percentage of gross national product (GNP), ODA volume has fallen from a historic norm of 0.33 per cent of the combined national product of DAC members (until 1992) to an unprecedented low of 0.22 per cent in 1997.[22] Three Nordic countries (Denmark, Norway and Sweden) and the Netherlands continue to be particularly generous, representing the only four donors whose share has exceeded the 0.7 per cent target set by the United Nations. At the other end of the scale, the ODA provided by the United States has now fallen below 0.1 per cent of the country's GNP — the lowest share among DAC members. While the percentage of aid allocated by DAC member States to countries in great need remains almost constant, the decrease in the total dollar volume of aid means a reduction of volume of funds transferred to countries in greatest needs.

[22] See OECD, op. cit.

However, according to DAC estimates, that smaller dollar volume appeared to be better targeted towards attaining goals in the social sectors, such as education, health or water.[23]

81. Continuation of the current adverse trends jeopardize adjustment and reform programmes, including social agendas, in a large number of low-income countries.[24] At its thirty-seventh session, the Commission reiterated that the attainment of the agreed target for ODA of 0.7 per cent of GNP, as well as the target 0.15 per cent of GNP for ODA for the least developed countries, are important requirements for mobilizing resources for social development in developing countries. Donor countries that have met the 0.15 per cent target will seek to undertake to reach 0.20 per cent. In the last few months, several developed countries announced their intention to increase their share of ODA in GNP.

82. External debt problems continue to constitute one of the most serious constraints to the social development of many developing countries, particularly the least developed countries. Concern over the debt crisis and its consequences has prompted the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America to propose new initiatives regarding the debt of the poor countries. Consideration of these initiatives is being put on the agenda of the Group of Seven/Eight meeting at Cologne, Germany, in summer 1999.

83. While the payments capacity of many of these countries have deteriorated, the overall issues of development finance have come to the fore on the international agenda. The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/179, decided to consider at its fifty-fourth session the convening, not later than the year 2001, of "a summit, international conference, special session of the General Assembly or other appropriate high-level international intergovernmental forum on financing for development with the aim of furthering the global partnership for development. An open-ended working group has been created to prepare this meeting.

84. At the thirty-seventh session of the Commission for Social Development, the agreed conclusions adopted on the issue of "social services for all" also underscored the need to look into some innovative approaches to mobilization of resources for social development. One instrument of poverty reduction — the 20/20 initiative — continues to be widely discussed among the partners in development cooperation. While a critical analysis of the contribution of the 20/20 initiative to the promotion of basic social services was urged, interested parties also underscored that the initiative leads to the combination of efforts of both donors and recipients of aid in a most visible way, matching domestic funds with an equal amount of foreign financial resources. In this regard, the importance of agreeing on a mutual commitment between interested developed and developing countries was reaffirmed by the Commission. It was also stressed that the General Assembly at its special session should consider reports by the World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, DAC and other multilateral organizations on the various dimensions of the implementation of the 20/20 initiative. Apart from the economic issue, there is a visible link between the provision of basic social services and human rights issues, particularly in the context of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The joint effort of public agencies, the private sector and civil society organizations to promote the 20/20 initiative may be particularly valuable in the delivery of social services. A coordinated effort is important not only in ensuring basic financing but also for social impact assessment, the setting of standards and the evaluation of implemented programmes.

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[23] Ibid.

[24] See "World economic situation and prospects for 1999", Department of Economic and Social Affairs/UNCTAD joint report, New York, 1999.

85. The issue of resources for social development has gained prominence in the countries of the former USSR and Eastern Europe, where the overwhelming economic and political change has proven to be painful, if not traumatic, creating previously unknown hardships among vast segments of the population. The emergence of persistent poverty (in the 1990s, according to a UNDP estimate, the number of the poor increased in these countries by over 150 million[25]) and the plight of these "new poor" have become matters of great concern. While the establishment of new mechanisms for social protection better suited to the needs of market economy is a critical task in the transition process, the financial and technical aspects of this assistance within this context cannot be overlooked.

Commitment 10. International cooperation for social development

86. The World Summit for Social Development was a landmark event for the international collaboration in the field of social development. It has brought to the fore the recognition that social development is an integral feature of domestic and international policy, and that economic programmes and projects all have social dimensions. The importance of an integrated and comprehensive implementation of the commitments made by the Summit was reaffirmed by the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-seventh session.

87. While mobilization of resources for social development has been an integral part of international cooperation in this field, the framework and scope for joint efforts is much wider. The Declaration and Programme of Action of the Summit called for better coordination of activities of the United Nations system, including technical assistance and cooperation, as well as promoting capacity-building measures at various levels. The United Nations also has been making strides in enhancing the system's capacity for gathering and analysing information and developing indicators of social development.[26]

88. As the impact of the international economic environment upon the attainment of social development goals have been recognized by the international community, mutually agreed and coordinated measures to improve the functioning of the world economy have distinct social connotations. Lower inflation, for example, is not only an important monetary target but in a sense a social one as well, in as much as it is beneficial to the lower income groups of the population. On the other hand, over-concentration on low inflation may foreclose effects to stimulate demand and increase employment. In a broader sense, the attainment of an economically sound and stable domestic environment is crucial for all countries since it increases the effectiveness of the arrangements at the national and international levels to overcome poverty, increase employment and enhance social integration.

89. The February 1999 meeting in Germany of the finance ministers and central bank governors of the Group of Seven/Eight industrialized economies, together with the Managing Director of IMF and the President of the European Central Bank, produced a warning that market conditions have worsened in some regions and that the outlook for economic growth has become somewhat less favourable since autumn 1998. Having committed themselves to a domestically based strategy to achieving more balanced growth, reducing imbalances and supporting recovery in emerging market economies, the Group also pledged strong cooperation to promote stability of the international monetary system and announced the launching of a financial stability forum to help avert future global crisis. The forum,

[25] See UNDP, "Poverty in transition?", report of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, New York, 1998.

[26] In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1998/290 of 31 July 1998, a report has been prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division on harmonization and rationalization of development indicators, to be presented to an informal Council meeting on development indicators on 10 and 11 May 1999.

composed of 35 participants, including international regulatory bodies, would seek to serve as an early-warning system, strengthening existing arrangements for supervision and surveillance of the international financial system. The Group indicated that they hoped to reach an agreement on debt relief for the poorest highly indebted countries by the summit at Cologne in June 1999.

90. The Group of Eight Conference of Ministers of Labour, which took place at Washington, D.C., on 24 and 26 February 1999 (see para. 33 above), was devoted to the theme "Labour policies in a rapidly changing global economy". The participants agreed that there was a need to make better use of international organizations to help establish the labour market institutions and strong social safety nets necessary to enhance growth, employment and social cohesion. The Conference also stressed that globalization provides great opportunities but also carries risks for workers and challenges for policy makers.

91. Solving specific problems often calls for a strengthening of regional cooperation on economic and social matters, including enhancing cooperation structures and making management more effective. Within the United Nations system, one of the recent examples includes the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) regional inter-agency coordination meeting chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General and attended by heads of agency regional offices in Europe. The meeting underscored the need for a mechanism that would facilitate a common overall assessment of trends and priority needs for assistance in the region. This would serve to facilitate adjustments in the definition of goals by various organizations with a view to enhancing synergies and promoting closer inter-agency cooperation at the country level. In the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) regions, second regional follow-up conferences are planned for the last quarter of 1999 and the first quarter of 2000, respectively. Regional and subregional meetings were convened by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and ECA in December 1998 and March 1999.

92. Four years after Copenhagen, the increasing scope of collaboration by different actors and the emergence of new partnerships has become one of the most salient and important features of cooperation for social development. While coherent and well-focused government efforts remain an integral element of social development framework, involvement of civil society and private sector proves to be highly beneficial for attaining both specific social targets and equitable development. Strengthening social institutions has also been an essential element of domestic and international capacity-building. Forging new partnerships at the national and international levels permits improvement in the design, implementation and evaluation of social programmes, as well as the identification of new areas of cooperation.

III. Conclusion

93. It will be recalled that the Committee, at its organizational session in May 1998, requested the Secretary-General to submit to its second substantive session in April 2000 a comprehensive document assessing the overall level of implementation of the outcome of the Summit, including the identification of constraints, obstacles and successes and lessons learned, as well as recommendations on further actions and initiatives at the national and international levels.

94. In order to assist the Secretary-General in preparing this report, the Committee also requested the Secretary-General to formulate general guidelines and a structure and common

framework for national reporting on the progress made and obstacles encountered, and to invite Governments to provide information. These guidelines were prepared and forwarded to Governments in October 1998 by the Secretary-General, with a deadline for response of 30 June 1999. The Secretary-General wishes to invite Governments to submit their responses as soon as possible in order to enable the Secretariat to complete the report in time for consideration by the Committee at its second session.

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Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives
First session
New York, 17–28 May 1999
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*
Consideration of further actions and initiatives to implement the commitments made at the Summit

Further initiatives for the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to decision 2 of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives at its organizational session, in May 1998, the Committee has two tasks: review of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development; and consideration of further initiatives. The present report discusses the second of these tasks. It is based on the report of the Secretary-General on further initiatives for the implementation of the outcome of the Summit (E/CN.5/1999/3), prepared for the consideration of the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-seventh session, in February 1999, and has been revised in the light of discussions that took place during the Commission. A separate report on a preliminary assessment of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit (A/AC.253/7) will also be before the Committee.

The report consists of three main sections. The introduction describes the criteria for selection of issues for consideration at the special session. Sections I–X describe possible issues under each of the 10 commitments adopted at Copenhagen. The report's conclusion

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emphasizes that these proposals are preliminary, and that one of the goals of the first session of the Committee will be to identify priorities and to mandate the elaboration of a limited number of specific initiatives.

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Introduction

1. The holding of the World Summit for Social Development, and the attendance of 117 heads of State or Government and the representation of 69 other States, were a powerful global expression of commitment to social goals. These were stated in terms of the three central goals of poverty eradication, full employment and social integration and developed in the preparatory process into the 10 commitments agreed at the Summit.[1]

2. Since the Summit, Governments and international organizations have responded to the 10 commitments and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development[2] agreed at Copenhagen in many strategic and concrete ways. There has been marked improvement in the attention being given to social issues by many countries and in most international organizations, initiatives have been taken, and policies have evolved in ways that are contributing to movement towards the Summit goals.

3. There are wide national differences in the extent of, and capacity for, implementation. The period since the Summit has been relatively brief and, recently, external circumstances for many countries have deteriorated. Therefore, the process of moving towards achievement of the Summit goals can, in the best of circumstances, have only begun. Where strategies and policies have been changed, it is too early for substantial, measurable results to have been achieved. A survey of available evidence is summarized in the reports of the Secretary-General on preliminary assessment of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development (E/CN.5/1999/4 and A/AC.253/7). It suggests that, globally, the absolute number of people living in poverty is still increasing; that the number of people officially recorded as unemployed remains high; that the number of underemployed people is enormous and growing; and that social disintegration is intensifying in some countries.

4. Therefore, the imperatives for focusing attention on these issues remain at least as strong as, if not stronger than, at the time of the Summit. To seriously attempt this requires renewed commitment not only to the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development[3] and Programme of Action but also to searching for additional and more effective ways of implementing them.

5. The special session of the General Assembly to be held in Geneva from 26 to 30 June 2000 and its preparatory process offer a welcome opportunity for sharing and comparing experiences, learning from the policies and programmes of other countries, strengthening commitment, encouraging more effective action and identifying further concrete means of addressing the 10 commitments. The fact that the special session is being held in the millennial year will give an additional incentive to treating these central social issues with a long-term perspective, and to the preparation of strategies that are appropriate for the early part of the next century.

6. The objectives of the special session identified by the General Assembly include both evaluating the effectiveness of implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the Summit and deciding on further initiatives for achieving these commitments. At its organizational session in May 1998, the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development agreed that the framework for discussion at the special session would be the 10 commitments made at Copenhagen. Initiatives are to be sought in relation to each of them. The thirty-seventh session of the Commission for Social Development (9–19 February 1999) offered the first formal opportunity for discussion of the issues that should be addressed by the special session; and the present report updates the report of the Secretary-General prepared for that session on further initiatives for the implementation of the outcome of the Summit (E/CN.5/1999/3) on the basis of discussion held there, and provides a review of issues that could be addressed at the special session.

7. The generation of additional concrete and innovative means of strengthening and extending the implementation of the Summit commitments and plans is a demanding task. The first step is to decide on the issues that need the most urgent attention. Accordingly, the present report concentrates on providing a basis for identification of suitable issues for inclusion in the agenda of the special session. A few comments are also made about possible initiatives relating to them.

8. The criteria for selection of issues to be included in the agenda for the special session include:

- The importance of the issue in respect of addressing one or more of the commitments;
- Whether the issue was included in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development or the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development;
- Whether possible means for addressing the issue are available;

- The importance of a proposal related to an issue as a contribution to, or a means of coping with a constraint on achieving one of the commitments;
- The concreteness of such a proposal. At its organizational session, the Committee agreed that the special session would simply reaffirm the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and so would avoid renegotiating the text. The special session will therefore have the opportunity to concentrate entirely on new initiatives for implementation;
- The relevance of a proposal to the commitments. This is a broad limitation, however, because the commitments include creating an enabling environment for social development, and this covers many economic, political and institutional issues as well as the directly social, which is in any case a broad category itself;
- The feasibility of a proposal. Feasibility is a complex issue to assess, because it has several dimensions including the political, institutional, administrative and financial, and these qualities vary enormously among countries.

9. Several of the contextual comments made at the Commission for Social Development, during its thirty-seventh session, warrant repetition. The importance of aiming for action-oriented and focused outcomes was emphasized. One of the principal features of the Summit — the recognition of the close interdependence of social and economic dimensions of societies, illustrated through the interrelatedness of the 10 commitments — should be maintained at the special session. This leads to a comprehensive, holistic approach, integrating social and economic objectives and policies at national, regional and international levels. The centrality of the goal of increasing human security through people-centred development was reaffirmed: the basis of social development lies in the equitable empowerment of individuals, communities and countries. The recommendations which follow, for consideration at the special session, refer to each of the 10 commitments and have been prepared with those comments in mind.

I. An enabling environment for social development

10. Harmonious and equitable social and economic development requires both formal democratic systems and participatory institutions and mechanisms. Necessary conditions include both free and fair elections and opportunities for the various groups to express their opinions, and to be heard and for equitable compromises to be reached. Free and fair elections — as the experience of many new democracies has shown — are only one element of a democratic society, albeit a crucial one. Some other critical elements include well-functioning legislative and judicial systems, respect for political, economic and social rights, an independent media, use of legal norms, and predictable rules for decision-making and conflict resolution. These elements are prerequisites of sustaining an open society and interrelated participatory democracy.

11. Experience with various participatory mechanisms could well be discussed during the preparatory process, with a view to recommending additional possibilities. Subsidiarity is a widely accepted principle involving dealing with issues at the most appropriate level, so it is required that attention be directed not only to national government but also to local government and to international governance. The Commission for Social Development, at its thirty-sixth session, in 1998, considered a mechanism which some Governments have found of value: the creation of advisory social and economic councils which include representatives of the major sectors of society, including businesses, unions, religious organizations and other actors of civil society, along with various segments of government.

12. Since the Summit, economic and social interdependence has continued to increase; thus, one issue that would naturally be in the agenda for the special session is the implications of globalization for national social policy. The issue has both analytical and prescriptive dimensions, and since there has been much discussion of the former, at the special session the concentration should naturally be on national and international policy responses.

13. Awareness, concern and even preoccupation with globalization have intensified considerably since the Summit was held. One of the important achievements of the Summit was the recognition that countries could not achieve social goals — let alone cope with the consequences of growing international integration — by themselves. With growing global integration, increasing international cooperation has become an imperative for social and economic development. At the same time, there is growing sentiment among many countries that aspects of globalization can in fact marginalize rather than integrate economies, and that sustainable growth is not automatic. Recent cases of international capital flight from developing countries, which have created tremendous strains and increased poverty, have been attributed in part to shortcomings in domestic policies and institutions, for example, but they can also be seen as symptomatic of an

international financial system which fails to differentiate satisfactorily the performance of individual developing countries. Several responses are required.

14. First and most important is the recognition that, despite globalization, every Government still has considerable power. The discussion of national policy at the Summit was, and such discussion at the special session has to be, premised on this fact.

15. Second, countries can act together to more effectively reduce threats of international volatility, instability, inefficiency and inequity. More of the standards and infrastructure of international exchange have to be established or provided by countries acting together. The norms and structures of such areas as trade and finance, communication and travel and some aspects of health services, social policy and crime prevention must be universal if they are to be effective. Global norms and standards have to be extended and strengthened and the range of global public goods increased. The commitments and parts of the Programme of Action of the Summit are examples of international standard setting. Such cooperative international activity must be a major focus of the special session.

16. Third, much more rigorous evaluation about the extent of liberalization and about its sequencing, speed and planning is required. Such evaluation must include the social dimension. Following the Asian financial crisis, it is now clearer than ever that, in the context of international financial liberalization, there have been high costs for some countries from weaknesses in both domestic policy and the international institutional and policy structure. For while major elements in the crisis have had to do with domestic structures, institutions and policies, a major impediment to social development is international institutional and policy weakness.

17. A priority for the Special session could therefore be to make two clear statements on:

(a) Principles of national socio-economic policy for responses to financial crises, for use by Governments and international institutions when they must cope with the consequences of international financial instability;

(b) Socio-economic aspects of reform of international financial structures and policies, which could provide a foundation for technical discussions on the subject in other, appropriate forums.

18. Such issues raise questions for all countries about the interplay between state and market in the provision of socio-economic well-being. Such reflection can range from practical issues such as the most effective means for offsetting various forms of market failure in particular circumstances to conceptual questions about the compatibility of liberalized markets with equitable social development.

19. Since the Summit, much more attention has been given by corporations and by Governments — most recently at the Commission for Social Development — to the social responsibilities of business. There has been considerable activity in terms of extending the articulation of goals, principles and policies. The special session might like to systematically review this and to attempt some basic, globally applicable guidelines. The Second Enterprise Forum to be convened by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in November 1999 will provide recommendations on corporate citizenship and social initiatives, and therefore should provide an impetus to the special session's work in this field. The Forum will involve entrepreneurs working in both industrialized and developing countries, and will embrace business activities of different scales of operation.

20. Concern about the inequities and inefficiencies caused by corruption has increased since the Summit. There is growing recognition of the injustices, distortions and economic losses caused by corruption. There is recognition, too, of the complexity of corruption and the variety of the forms that it can take, at both national and international levels, as well as on the demand and supply side. Progress has been made in several intergovernmental contexts in establishing a framework to discourage corruption and in setting up disincentives. More work needs to be done on clarifying the meaning of corruption and what constitutes corrupt practices, and to obtain greater international convergence of views in these areas. Several delegations mentioned the possibility of promoting standards and means for discouraging corruption during the special session.

21. International commitment to principles underlying many of the Summit commitments was previously expressed in various covenants, conventions and declarations concerned with human rights, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[4] the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Declaration on the Right to Development.[5] The Summit called for encouraging ratification of existing international human rights conventions that have not been ratified, and implementing the provisions of conventions and covenants that have been ratified. The special session may wish to review progress in this regard, and reiterate the call to Governments to ratify and implement appropriate international agreements concerning human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Topics for further initiatives

22. The Preparatory Committee may wish to consider the following topics for further initiatives:

(a) Experience with various types of participatory mechanisms, such as advisory social and economic councils;

(b) The implications for social policy of recent trends in globalization, and suggestions for national and international policy responses;

(c) The desirability of extending or strengthening global norms and standards for social policy;

(d) Preparation of principles of socio-economic policy for responding to financial crises;

(e) Preparation of guidelines on the social responsibilities of business;

(f) Standards and means for discouraging corruption;

(g) Review progress and reiterate the call to Governments to ratify and implement appropriate international agreements concerning human rights and fundamental freedoms.

II. Poverty eradication

23. The reports of the Secretary-General on the preliminary assessment of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit (E/CN.5/1999/4 and A/AC.253/7) indicate the global extent and depth of poverty. The enormity of the number of people in poverty is clear: about a quarter of humankind are severely deprived and more than another quarter are at the borderline. Poverty eradication is the most important moral issue facing this age.

24. Much work has already been undertaken throughout the United Nations system on the subject of poverty eradication. This was briefly summarized in two of the reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on poverty eradication (A/52/573 and A/53/329). Shortly after the Summit, the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) set up four task forces to prepare coordinated action on major commitments of all the global conferences. The organizational conclusion of this process within the United Nations system was a statement of commitment for action to eradicate poverty issued in June 1998 by the executive heads of all United Nations agencies. The statement reaffirmed that poverty eradication is a key international commitment and a central objective of the United Nations system.

25. The executive heads of organizations in the United Nations system outlined the elements of a shared strategy and committed themselves to the concerted effort by all agencies towards poverty eradication and also to playing a supportive and catalytic role in mobilizing the energies and resources of all development actors — Governments, the private sector, civil society, donors and above all the poor themselves — in the campaign against poverty.

26. National poverty reduction strategies are the most important means of moving towards global poverty eradication. The special session provides an opportunity for all countries and international agencies to review current conditions and to exchange experience on strategies and best practices for poverty eradication. Discussion could reflect both successful policies and constraints. While each country will develop its own strategy appropriate to national circumstances, the special session could confirm that important goals within such strategies would include creation of income-generating opportunities, assurance of income support, provision of basic services and guarantees of minimum living standards for all people.

27. Further consideration might be given by the special session to the value of adopting international targets for poverty eradication based on national strategies and experience. While the heads of State and Government who met at Copenhagen made a strong commitment to the goal of eradicating poverty and recommended that countries set their own time-bound goals for eradicating absolute poverty, the Summit did not set a global, time-bound goal. Since the Summit, the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development has set itself the goal of "halving the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015". The special session may wish to adopt this same target, and establish strategies to achieve it.

28. The Copenhagen Programme of Action called upon Governments to implement the commitments that had been made to meet the basic needs of all, with assistance from the international community. Many of those commitments called for specific targets to be attained by the year 2000. Since the special session will be held at the mid-point of the year 2000, it would provide an opportune occasion for a review of the commitments and the extent to which they have been reached. It would also provide an opportunity for the international community to revise and update the targets, as needed, and to give renewed political commitment to their attainment. A report prepared by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs entitled "Charting the progress of populations", dated 1 December 1998, provides an excellent basis for this review. The targets

reiterated in the Copenhagen Programme of Action to be achieved by the year 2000 are:

- Providing universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school-age children;
- Attaining life expectancy of not less than 60 years in any country;
- Reducing mortality rates of infants and children under five years of age by one third of the 1990 level, or 50 to 70 per 1,000 live births, whichever is less;
- Reducing maternal mortality by one half of the 1990 level;
- Reducing severe and moderate malnutrition among children under five years of age by half of the 1990 level;
- Promoting attainment by all peoples of the world of a level of health that will permit them to lead a socially and economically productive life, and to this end, ensuring primary health care for all;
- Reducing malaria mortality and morbidity by at least 20 per cent compared to 1995 levels in at least 75 per cent of affected countries;
- Eradicating, eliminating or controlling major diseases constituting global health problems, in accordance with paragraph 6.12 of Agenda 21;
- Improving the availability of affordable and adequate shelter for all, in accordance with the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000.

29. In addition, the Copenhagen Programme of Action called upon Governments to implement other, longer-term commitments to meet the basic needs of all (a review of progress achieved in the attainment of these commitments could prove useful, and the special session may wish to undertake such a review as a means of providing added impetus to their achievement):

- Closing the gender gap in primary and secondary school education by the year 2005;
- Attaining universal primary education in all countries before the year 2015;
- Reducing the adult illiteracy rate — the appropriate age group to be determined in each country — to at least half its 1990 level, with an emphasis on female literacy; achieving universal access to quality education, with particular priority being given to primary and technical education and job training, combating illiteracy, and eliminating gender disparities in access to, retention in and support for education;
- By the year 2015, achieving an infant mortality rate below 35 per 1,000 live births and an under-five mortality rate below 45 per 1,000;
- By the year 2015, a further reduction in maternal mortality rates by one half;
- Making accessible through the primary health-care system reproductive health to all individuals of appropriate ages as soon as possible and no later than the year 2015, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and taking into account the reservations and declarations made at that Conference, especially those concerning the need for parental guidance and parental responsibility;
- Achieving food security by ensuring a safe and nutritionally adequate food supply, at both the national and international levels, a reasonable degree of stability in the supply of food, as well as physical, social and economic access to enough food for all, while reaffirming that food should not be used as a tool for political pressure;
- Providing, on a sustainable basis, access to safe drinking water in sufficient quantities, and proper sanitation for all.

30. An important effort in the eradication of poverty involves supported self-help. Many people living in poverty may be able to raise their standards of living through their own efforts, especially if those efforts receive assistance. Examples include maximizing opportunities for establishment and expansion of small business by increasing the availability of credit, including microcredit, minimizing interest rates, improving infrastructure and the equity of access to productive inputs such as land and sites for enterprise, and increasing the accessibility of information and advisory services. While there are many necessary conditions for rapid poverty reduction, many of which are discussed below, one that is readily amenable to influence and given too little attention is credit, both at the microlevel and for small business. One issue for discussion is additional means of encouraging microcredit schemes.

31. While the most effective approach to poverty reduction is commonly through attempting to enable the poor to help themselves, another necessary expression of commitment to poverty reduction strategy is redistribution. The extent of global poverty suggests that policies relating to

redistribution have a place in the agenda of the special session.

32. The scope for introducing, expanding, and strengthening or reforming social protection systems is a major topic of debate in many countries at present, including those most severely affected by the financial crisis. Discussion of standards for social protection and of strategies for the introduction and management of social protection would be appropriate. A neglected subject that could well be addressed in this area is ways of improving the quality of management of national social protection systems.

33. In many countries, the community-based organizations have been instrumental in strengthening the reciprocity networks and creating an atmosphere of trust and mutual support. This social capital is now recognized to be a crucial asset of society, the value of which is particularly clear when there are economic shocks and adverse economic conditions. Such organizations are active in providing primary health care, clean drinking water, sanitation, formal and informal training, services to people living in poverty, microcredit, and assistance to raise agricultural productivity and develop small businesses. Promoting community participation proves to be as important as fostering individual choice in increasing the economic productivity of the population, particularly in poor urban communities. Community-based organizations are also particularly important in rural development. The special session may wish to consider what policies can be recommended to make community participation in social development more effective.

34. For countries with economies in transition, the process of movement towards a market structure has turned out to be much more difficult and painful than was originally anticipated. The patterns of transition vary substantially and some countries fared better than others in arresting the decline of output and in protecting the welfare of citizens. In most countries with economies in transition, there has been a substantial rise in poverty, including child poverty. Also, the unemployed and the "working poor" are among those who are hit hardest. In many of these countries, substantial groups of people affected by persistent poverty and multiple deprivations have emerged. The rise in poverty and inequality is undermining social development, particularly in many countries of the former USSR, and threatening to reverse earlier social achievements and calling into question support of the population for the economic reforms. Taking into account the growing spread of poverty and its highly negative social and political dimensions, the special session may wish to consider what kind of national, regional and international measures can be recommended in order to reverse the negative trends.

35. The Copenhagen Programme of Action called for development of comprehensive national strategies for improving reproductive health care and child health-care services and ensuring that people living in poverty have full access to those services, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. The special session may wish to consider national experience in the development of such strategies, following any initiatives set forth by the Committee.

Topics for further initiatives

36. The Committee may wish to consider the following topics for further initiatives:

(a) Further guidance on important aspects to be incorporated into national strategies for poverty eradication;

(b) Adoption of a global target for poverty eradication of halving the number of people living in absolute poverty by the year 2015;

(c) Review of the attainment of commitments to meet the basic needs of all by the year 2000 contained in the Copenhagen Programme of Action;

(d) Review of ongoing activities to meet longer-term commitments to meet the basic needs of all contained in the Copenhagen Programme of Action;

(e) Experience with programmes to extend credit, and means for encouraging microcredit schemes;

(f) Discussion of policies of redistribution;

(g) The establishment, strengthening and improvement in management of national social protection systems;

(h) Policies to make community participation in social development activities more effective;

(i) National, regional and international measures to counteract the spread of poverty in countries with economies in transition.

III. Employment

37. Growth of employment has become the highest priority for national and international economic and social policy. It will contribute more than any other economic or social achievement to reducing poverty, to increasing personal and national economic security, to reducing waste, to increasing efficiency, to improving equity and to strengthening social integration. The Commission for Social Development, at its thirty-fifth session, in February 1997, concluded that it is

imperative for all countries and the international community to reinstate the attainment of full, productive, and appropriately and adequately remunerated and freely chosen employment as a central objective of economic and social policies.[6]

38. Yet, in most countries unemployment and underemployment are high. Growth of employment — of income-generating opportunities for work — could therefore well become the principal focus of the special session. Employment-centred economic and social policy not only increases opportunities for work but also encourages initiative, reduces poverty and can contribute to reducing welfare dependency. The agreed conclusions on productive employment and sustainable livelihoods, adopted by the Commission at its thirty-fifth session, in its resolution 35/2, suggest some ways forward.

39. The Commission recognized that setting time-bound goals and targets for expanding employment and reducing unemployment would give a strong signal of the increased priority to be accorded to the objective of full employment.[7] In the past many countries have set targets for the intermediate goals of reduction of inflation or for the rate of economic growth but few set targets for the centrally important goal of employment growth and linked them with strategies for their achievement.

40. Adoption of a central goal for growth of employment involves refocusing and modifying macroeconomic policies. One of the issues that was central to the whole Summit was the importance of integrating economic and social policy more effectively. One of the principal areas where this is vital is in relation to macroeconomic policy. More contemporary national and international discussion of how to achieve a balanced approach to macroeconomic policy could be very valuable, focusing on how to simultaneously address economic and social goals, such as full employment, low inflation and development in the fullest sense, including both efficient economic growth and an effective strategy for increasing equity. The recent changes of emphasis by major industrialized countries and by the leaders of the European Union suggest the possibility of a new direction. Aspects of the issue relate to the scope for further international cooperation.

41. A more sophisticated balance of economic goals is possible, including aiming for simultaneous reduction of unemployment and low inflation. One of the benefits of globalization is that intensifying international competition removes or reduces the capacity of enterprises to administer prices and so reduces inflationary pressure. Changes in technology, industrial structure, the relative power of trade unions and other factors are altering the pattern of demand for labour and reducing pressure for wage increases. In this situation, where national inflation rates are commonly lower than at any time for decades and in which inflationary pressure is much reduced, there is more scope for employment-enhancing macroeconomic policies. Such policies must aim to increase the rate of economic growth, especially in ways that will maximize the growth of employment.

42. For many developing countries, the principal issue is the thrust of development strategy: how to strengthen employment-generating, productivity-increasing human development. For most developing countries, rural development must be the main element in the national employment strategy. Crucial requirements are well known and include improving the access to and quality of primary, secondary, technical and vocational education; improving marketing arrangements for primary commodities; land reform; mobilization of domestic saving for infrastructure including small scale, local public works and for private investment; and attracting foreign direct investment under conditions that ensure benefits to the receiving countries.

43. One of the issues discussed at the Commission for Social Development was the importance of taking adequate account of the impact of technological developments on society in general, and their value in increasing levels of employment in particular. Continuous introduction of new technologies has proved essential for improving the efficiency of firms and for maintaining their competitiveness. The actual effect of new technologies on levels of employment varies in different situations. Some technological innovation displaces workers; in other cases, new technologies, combined with sufficient financing, can promote the development of entire new industries and provide new opportunities for employment. Technology can also improve the quality of employment, by replacing repetitive, unpleasant work, and it can help to cut waste and environmental pollution. In order to take full advantage of technological innovations, workers need to be prepared. Effective introduction of new technologies requires high-quality education and training systems which enable young people to become proficient in their use, and it also requires greater attention to provision of lifelong learning, so that workers can adapt to new opportunities provided by constantly evolving technologies.

44. A major concern is that the continuous introduction of new technologies is causing greater inequalities within countries and result in greater disparities among countries, as those people and societies with the resources and access to be able to utilize new technologies accrue great benefits,

while those without fall behind. To counteract this tendency, attention should be given to creating mechanisms for the transfer of technologies, to promoting research and development in labour-intensive technologies, to supporting efforts of developing countries to promote technological innovation and overall to increase the employment impact of new technologies. The special session might provide an appropriate forum for further discussion of this important issue.

45. The introduction of policies that simultaneously improve both efficiency and equity is quite feasible. An important example is improvements in human services. In few countries is there satiation of demand for services. Education, health, welfare and information services need to be extended or improved, pollution reduced, the environment better managed and the arts encouraged. As income rises, the proportion people want to spend on human services increases. Demand for education and training, for improvements in access to health services, and for care for the aged, the young and families in crisis rises, as does interest in travel and eating out, retailing and financial services, personal professional and technical services, and sports and culture.

46. The equitable availability of the first group of services can only be assured if they are principally supplied publicly. There are serious shortfalls in supplies of these public goods in all developing and transition countries and even in many developed countries. Countries might well want to aspire to international best practice in the provision of services for their own people, as well as in the production of goods and services for export, which certainly requires increased outlays, not downsizing as a result of restructuring.

47. Increasing public support for the non-profit community sector is another cost-effective means of increasing the availability of labour-intensive services and thus of employment. Part-time and voluntary work can be particularly important in the provision of services to groups with special needs. The provision of core support by government can enable some community services to be efficiently provided by combinations of part-time and volunteer workers.

48. Various types of employment experience and on-the-job training programmes have been found to be useful means of increasing the employability of the long-term unemployed in various countries. Among a great diversity of schemes are some that involve wage subsidies to employers; others are short-term training programmes and programmes which offer small capital grants or loans to potential small entrepreneurs.

49. The weakness of labour-market institutions has proved to be a severe handicap in dealing with the social consequences of economic crises and with the increased employment restructuring associated with greater integration into the global economy. It is therefore important to ensure freedom of association for workers, and to strengthen workers' and employers' organizations as well as institutions for collective bargaining and social dialogue. This will yield benefits in the form of greater social stability and the enhanced ability to mobilize broad-based cooperative effort in dealing with the problems of economic reform and the social consequences of economic crises. At the same time, it will also be important to strengthen the capacity of government agencies to design and implement active labour-market policies such as direct employment creation, retraining and redeployment assistance.

50. Informal and unregulated forms of employment are growing in developing, transitional and even industrialized countries. Furthermore, in the context of globalization, new trade and subcontracting relationships are emerging between the formal and informal sectors. Whereas the informal sector provides a valuable source of employment for both workers and entrepreneurs unable to find opportunities in the formal sector, it is also plagued by low productivity and poor working conditions. New initiatives to meet the challenge of the informal sector could focus on increasing productivity through access to credit, basic infrastructure and social services, on a regulatory environment which is conducive to improving the quality of work without stifling the informal sector's employment creating capacity and on organizing informal sector employers and workers to defend their own interests. Such initiatives could also involve local government, business and other civil society actors who are closest to the informal sector.

51. Innovative approaches to increasing employment were recommended at the International Expert Meeting on Innovative Employment Initiatives, hosted by the Austrian Government in February 1998 (see document A/53/350, annex). The report of the meeting contains a number of recommendations that the special session may wish to consider such as the reorganization of work, including reduction of working hours; the effectiveness of social pacts in some countries (discussed above); and employment subsidies to facilitate return to work for the long-term unemployed.

52. A particularly significant development was the adoption by the International Labour Conference at its eighty-sixth session on 18 June 1998 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up. This is a

significant step towards fulfilling commitment 3 (i) adopted in Copenhagen on "ensuring quality jobs" and safeguarding "the basic rights and interests of workers".

53. A comprehensive national employment strategy must also include explicit expression of the right to employment of the disabled and other disadvantaged groups such as indigenous people, migrants and ethnic minorities, and programmes for encouraging their inclusion in the workforce. The goals of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities are well addressed in the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.[8]

54. Strategies for reducing youth unemployment were discussed at the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth in Portugal, held in August 1998. The Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes[9] offers useful inputs into the discussion.

55. Some of the discussion during the International Year of Older Persons also provides useful material. Such issues as retirement ages, part-time work for older people, entrepreneurship among older persons and social security and pension arrangements are all important.

Topics for further initiatives

56. The Preparatory Committee may wish to consider the following topics for further initiatives:

(a) Mandating preparation of a global action programme for full employment in an integrating world;

(b) Design and introduction of policies which aim to increase the rate of economic growth in ways that will maximize the growth of employment;

(c) Refocusing macroeconomic policies so that social goals and priorities become central and are sought simultaneously with economic priorities;

(d) Strengthening procedures and institutions for social dialogue, including by encouraging growth of civil society organizations and guaranteeing freedom of association;

(e) Transfer of technology to promote technological innovation in all countries;

(f) Strengthening the capacity of government agencies to design and implement active labour-market policies;

(g) Increasing productivity and social protection in the informal and small business sectors by developing appropriate regulatory structures, organizational capacity and access to social services;

(h) Promoting an environment conducive to the employment of people with disabilities, strategies for reducing youth unemployment, and employment issues of interest to older persons.

IV. Social integration

57. The agreed conclusions on promoting social integration and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons, adopted by the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-sixth session,[10] together with the report of two expert workshops (E/CN.5/1998/4, annex; and E/CN.5/1998/5, annex), and the report of the Secretary-General on promoting social integration and participation of all people (E/CN.5/1998/2) provide substantial input into discussion on social integration for the special session. As at the Summit, the goal of a "society for all" was adopted.

58. One of the requirements for social integration is the generally held sense that society is fair. People need confidence that justice will generally prevail. This involves both the rule of law and fair judicial procedures as well as social justice. Inequity in all its forms — political, socio-economic and cultural — is one of the principal impediments to overcoming social exclusion. The actions of the private sector, non-government organizations and other groups within civil society are as crucial as those of government if efforts to overcome social exclusion and poverty and to strengthen social integration are to succeed. Whether setting an agenda for action, or implementing decisions already taken, Governments have a keen interest and an important stake in forging a partnership with other social actors.

59. A robust civil society is a prerequisite of participatory forms of government and a foundation for successful democratic development. Effective community organizations are also important in strengthening government accountability and transparency. A wide range of active non-government institutions within a democratic form of government provide the basis for a well-functioning society. At the same time, they help to maintain powerful underlying commitment to democratic development, political pluralism and the protection of individual liberties. While State action is indispensable in overcoming exclusion and fostering social integration, it is more successful when linked with an effective set of institutions in civil society.

60. Access to information has proved to be extremely important in establishing and maintaining a participatory culture at the national level. Although there are no ready-made schemes for promoting participation and social integration, the role of information is crucial in fostering policy dialogue and open political discourse. Better information-sharing can help Governments and all social actors to consider what is being done and what immediate priorities exist for the future. The efficacy of ongoing or proposed policy efforts in the social field can be better affirmed in a participatory way, with the effective involvement of the potential beneficiaries of proposed schemes. One of the challenges in this area is to make information that maximizes participation more readily available and user-friendly.

61. A free, open and professional media based on diversity of ownership and control is a crucial factor in effective participatory governance. A linchpin and safeguard of democratic development, a free mass communications media plays an indispensable role in ensuring diversity in society and equality of opportunity. In a democratic context, where the rule of law is reinforced by appropriate legal structures, a free media enables even smaller groups to define and represent themselves, providing at the same time an opportunity for open discussion, which is so important in peaceful resolution of actual or potential conflicts.

62. A growing concern in some countries has been the role of mass media in encouraging anti-social behaviour among vulnerable children and youth and in eroding the family influence in the socialization of children. An important and recent concern has been the impact of transnational informational technology and mass media on peoples' perceptions and expectations, in terms of their leading to or aggravating a conflict between expectations and realities, and between values and social roles, induced by the contrast between the cultures of rich countries and the pattern of opportunity in less well off societies.

63. In all countries, families are crucial in respect of the socialization of the young and the formation of relationships on which social cohesion depends. They are also one of the core providers of support for dependants, whether young, old or disabled. In many countries, they are the principal or only accessible providers. Even though five years have passed since the observance of the International Year of the Family, there is still much that can be done on their behalf, particularly in the areas of economic support and provision of social services. The special session may wish to reiterate support for action on behalf of families.

64. As fertility and mortality decline globally, the proportion of older persons in the population is rising in almost all countries. While the issue in industrialized countries is the sheer number of older persons, the concern in many developing countries is the unprecedented tempo of population ageing. Beyond demography, ageing has increasingly been recognized as a lifelong and society-wide phenomenon, one that calls for adjustment at both individual and societal levels. Individual adjustment to longevity is based on a recognition that late-life capabilities have their genesis in early life. Lifelong progression into the later years should be facilitated by promoting enabling environments provided by the family, the community and the society at large. National and international policies should be developed which facilitate the participation and integration of persons into society throughout the entire lifespan, and which provide the necessary support in periods of dependency, including in very old age. The special session might wish to consider these issues by comparing national experience and discussing the relevance of international norms.

65. The growth of national and international crime, increases in levels of violence, and continuing problems associated with the use of and trafficking in illicit drugs are other symptoms of social disintegration. A breakdown in national and international order which these problems represent can have high social and economic costs, expressed in heightened personal and community insecurity, and in the erosion of fair administrative, allocative and distributional structures. At its thirty-sixth session, in 1998, the Commission for Social Development considered that while the primary responsibility for crime prevention and criminal justice rests at the national level, violence, crime and illicit drugs activities are of such magnitude and also have such major transnational dimensions that they require international cooperation and coordination in respect of formulating and implementing effective responses. In this connection, the special session may wish to consider how it might best promote the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly on the control of illicit drugs held in June 1998.

66. Further evidence of the danger of social disintegration is the rise in levels of conflict within many countries in recent years. While all societies experience conflicts of interest among their constituent members, many societies seem to have lost the ability to find equitable and peaceful resolutions to those conflicts. The effects of internal conflict are painfully real and represent a severe hindrance to socio-economic development in the countries in which they occur. The Copenhagen Programme of Action called for improving

mechanisms for resolving conflicts peacefully and reintegrating society following conflicts, including efforts towards reconciliation and confidence-building between the conflicting groups, training in non-violent conflict resolution at all levels of education, the reconstruction of social institutions that have been destroyed, the reintegration of displaced and disabled persons, and the re-establishment of the rule of law and respect for all human rights. The special session might give priority attention to efforts to promote and support the efforts of countries to achieve this essential goal.

67. To achieve the goal of social inclusion will require addressing the issue of children at risk, particularly in times of conflict and war, or as a result of exploitation in the labour force or the sex industry, or because of family violence or disintegration. In many countries, the problems which lead to large numbers of children who are runaways or otherwise living in the streets of large cities remain recalcitrant. The Copenhagen Programme of Action called for giving special attention to promoting and protecting the rights of the child, with particular attention to the rights of the girl child, by, *inter alia*, encouraging the ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights on the Child and the Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s adopted at the World Summit for Children. The special session may wish to review the status of implementation of these agreements and encourage their further widespread application.

Topics for further initiatives

68. The Preparatory Committee may wish to consider the following topics for further initiatives:

(a) Actions to encourage the flow of information which maximizes participation, and to make information more user-friendly;

(b) Actions to support families, particularly in the areas of economic support and provision of social services;

(c) Comparison of national experience in policies on ageing and discussion of the relevance of adopting international norms;

(d) Consideration of activities to support the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to drugs, held in June 1998;

(e) Mechanisms for resolving conflicts peacefully and reintegrating society following conflicts;

(f) Status of ratification and implementation of international agreements concerning children.

V. Equality and equity between women and men

69. Gender equality is an issue for societies as a whole. Given the comprehensiveness of the implications of the gender dimension, the most important contribution of the special session to gender equality may well be to ensure that the issue is considered in relation to each commitment outlined in the Copenhagen Declaration — to ensure, in other words, that gender is mainstreamed.

70. There is a growing recognition among policy makers that redressing gender inequalities requires substantial changes in approaches to the formulation of policy, including development projects and programmes, specifically through the identification and recognition of gender factors in policy and programme design as well as subsequently in implementation. As with all national goals, however, gender mainstreaming involves emphasizing outcomes as well as plans and intentions. It implies changes in institutions, particularly the educational systems in relation to the new needs and concerns of society. Universal access to education for girls remains an issue of crucial importance in all countries. One concern for the special session will be whether targets can be strengthened and additional resources allocated to this essential requirement of social development.

71. Despite some progress, there is still gender-related discrimination in many countries, particularly at all levels of decision-making. Furthermore, without gender-sensitive policies, it is hardly possible to achieve alleviation of poverty because poverty has significant gender dimensions, for the causes and experiences of poverty can be different for women and men. Without the proper acknowledgement of gender factors, issues relating to a caring society that is supportive of children, sick people and the elderly cannot be adequately discussed. In high-income countries, it is impossible to discuss these issues and paid and unpaid work without reference to gender. In developing countries, two important gender-related issues are rural development and microcredit.

72. Equitable social development requires the mainstreaming of gender considerations in all levels of social policy-making and in the planning of programmes and projects. This is true not least because it is a prerequisite for achieving a "society for all", one of the primary goals of the

Summit. Therefore, the special session might appropriately consider the extent to which gender considerations have been successfully mainstreamed to date, and might provide an occasion for the exchange of experience in this regard, while recognizing that the specific concerns of women will be taken up at the special session of the General Assembly on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in early June 2000, on the theme "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

Topics for further initiatives

73. The Preparatory Committee may wish to consider the following topic for further initiatives:

Means of strengthening gender mainstreaming and promoting gender equality nationally and internationally.

VI. Universal and equitable access to quality education and health services

74. The Commission for Social Development, at its thirty-seventh session, in February 1999, adopted agreed conclusions on social services for all which offer numerous suggestions for achieving the goals contained in this commitment. The special session may wish to consider these suggestions in detail. In summary, the Commission expressed the view that investment in social services will contribute to poverty eradication, peace, equity and equality, social progress and cohesion, economic productivity, productive employment and full participation of all people in society. Extending the coverage of education, health care and other social services to include all members of society, while at the same time improving their quality, are therefore vital. To do this will probably require additional and more targeted funding, as well as improvements in the planning, administration and delivery of existing services so that they become more efficient and effective.

75. In nearly all countries, substantial improvements in access, delivery, quality and financing of social services are still required to meet the targets endorsed by the Summit, in particular the target of achieving universal primary education in all countries before the year 2015. The Commission for Social Development recommended to the special session that it reinforce those commitments by considering national strategies and supportive international policies necessary for their achievement.

76. The inadequacy of health care in many countries is clear, and in fact there has been deterioration in the provision of health care in many countries during the last couple of decades. The World Health Organization (WHO) is now addressing this subject, and will make proposals to the Committee on this issue at its first session.

77. Access to both education and health services are at the heart of the 20/20 initiative. Representatives of some 50 countries and a dozen United Nations funds, programmes and organizations, attending a meeting at Hanoi in October 1998 to review progress made since the Oslo meeting on the initiative in 1996, adopted the Hanoi Consensus on the 20/20 Initiative: Achieving Universal Access to Basic Social Services (A/53/684, annex), which begins by reiterating that the goal of universal access to basic social services is based on ethical, legal and economic grounds (para. 4), and goes on to state that the initiative suggests an indicative allocation of 20 per cent of national budgets in developing countries and 20 per cent of official development assistance to basic social services in order to close the gap between current spending and the minimum level required to achieve universal access (para. 6).

78. The gap between scientific possibilities and availability of funds which exists in the area of health research, particularly research on the diseases which afflict many people in developing countries who are unable to pay for development or production of modern effective drugs, makes it imperative for the State and other partners to forge more effective cooperation and partnerships with the private sector. There is a need to explore opportunities to increase the number of sponsors who may be willing to fund broader areas of health research. Research partnerships and other forms of joint ventures with major pharmaceutical companies can help to overcome an apparent market failure in this field, compensating for insignificant commercial prospects in this area and bringing closer the targets set at Copenhagen. The special session may wish to endorse partnership models as well as to consider new initiatives in this regard.

Topics for further initiatives

79. The Preparatory Committee may wish to consider the following topics for further initiatives:

(a) Mandating preparation of a new global plan of action to achieve access to education for all by 2015;

(b) Mandating preparation of a global plan of action to achieve access to basic health services for all by 2015;

(c) Further review and consideration of the impact effectiveness of the 20/20 initiative and measures for its lementation;

(d) Means for improving partnerships between the ic and private sectors in the area of health research so increase incentives for private research.

I. Accelerating the development of Africa and the least developed countries

Many of the studies already mentioned and those ussed below are of vital importance to Africa and to least loped countries, as regards, *inter alia*, education, health, loyment, debt, rural development and official lopment assistance (ODA). Many initiatives are under . The subregional conferences on follow-up to the mit organized by the Economic Commission for Africa A) are contributing to identifying additional specifically sed initiatives. At the conference on Summit follow-up stern and southern Africa organized by ECA, speakers hasized many issues, *inter alia*, the importance of eving the economic growth rates sought in the United ons Special Initiative for Africa, to enable expansion of loyment and reduction of poverty; the value of roeconomic stability; the centrality of universal, high-ity education and health services; the priority given to ıcing corruption; and the importance of developing eful means to resolve conflicts.

The majority of African countries continue to rely on few commodities for export earnings. This situation, bined with the fact that prices for most of those modities are low and declining, results in inadequate spects for growth. Diversification of commodity luction and exports is an effective way of improving food rity, raising employment and incomes and also lessening ca's vulnerability to changes in the external ronment. This issue has been the subject of discussion e General Assembly at its forty-eighth, forty-ninth and eth sessions. In a report on the subject, the Secretary-eral recommended the establishment of a diversification ity to finance diversification projects and programmes. Common Fund for Commodities has taken some action little progress has been made on this issue. The special ion can be the forum to remobilize support for the ity and to spur action on this important aspect of African elopment.

82. Inadequate access to credit and high interest rates do not foster entrepreneurship and are deterrents to the establishment of dynamic small and medium-sized enterprises, the basis of a revitalized domestic private sector in Africa. There are particular institutional reasons for discussing them in relation to Africa. Background work is required on how the special session could make a contribution to dealing with this crucial subject.

83. The situation in Africa regarding human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) has become catastrophic. Today, more than 20 million Africans are infected with HIV. An estimated four million new infections occurred in Africa in 1998 and over two million people died of AIDS, including nearly half a million children. Hard-won gains in life expectancy and child survival rates are being wiped out and AIDS-related suffering is enormous for individuals, families and societies. Education and health systems are severely strained by the loss of trained personnel and incur higher costs because of the epidemic.

84. In the light of this crisis, the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations (CCO) endorsed a Partnership against HIV/AIDS in Africa in April 1998. This partnership will be the primary vehicle for intensifying the response to the crisis in Africa. The goal of the partnership, which consists of Governments, UNAIDS co-sponsoring agencies, bilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, is to mobilize Governments and organizations of civil society to redirect and expand national and international political, programme and financial commitments and action to address the epidemic and its impact on life and the potential for socio-economic development in Africa. Experience to date points to a number of "key elements" which successful national AIDS programmes and projects seem to have in common. The partnership will support these elements and exchange experience on a large scale so that successful responses to the epidemic can be multiplied rapidly across all African countries. The members of the partnership will work to create a policy and social environment conducive to success action against the epidemic. The "core" programmatic actions which will be supported include youth education and mobilization, voluntary counselling and testing, interventions to prevent mother-to-child transmission, strengthened action to prevent and treat sexually transmitted diseases, distribution of condoms, improved community standards of care, treatment of common opportunistic infections, and special services for families with orphans.

The special session might wish to support and promote these activities.

Topics for further initiatives

85. The Preparatory Committee may wish to consider the following topics for further initiatives:

(a) Support for the commodities diversification facility;

(b) Further support for appropriate efforts to reduce substantially the debts of the poorest and heavily indebted low-income countries in Africa (see also sect. IX below);

(c) Promoting access to credit, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (see section on employment);

(d) Strengthening support for activities to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS and counteract its negative impact on African societies.

VIII. Ensuring that structural adjustment programmes include social development goals

86. The debate about the most appropriate policies to follow when countries face current-account deficits, structural imbalances and financial crises of different origins, while seeking to maintain or create conditions conducive to economic and employment growth without inflation, has continued since the Summit. A vigorous dialogue among different players with different viewpoints is under way.

87. In the period since the Summit, many countries, and indeed the international system as a whole, have had to face severe disruptions, in some cases on an unprecedented scale. It has become clear that there are wide differences among Governments and professionals about the most appropriate means for handling the financial crises. For example, it is essential to improve the speed of response to crises. A crucial issue for discussion is how to ensure that social policies are incorporated in the initial macroeconomic strategy for dealing with crises (see sect. I above).

88. Among the questions many countries have indicated that they intended raising in the preparations for, and at the special session itself are:

- What changes have been made to structural adjustment programmes since the Summit to implement the Summit commitment to ensuring that social development goals are included?
- To what extent has International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank practice in countries, as compared with institutional policy, actually changed? Are further recommendations required?

89. The importance of increasing the transparency and accountability of the Bretton Woods institutions and of the World Trade Organization were suggested as important issues for discussion by speakers during the thirty-seventh session of the Commission for Social Development. As the Summit called for the General Assembly to give consideration to promoting and strengthening the coordination of United Nations system activities, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization at the global, regional and national levels in the area of economic and social development programmes, including through reports to and meetings in coordination with the Economic and Social Council, the special session might wish to consider ways and means to strengthen such coordination, particularly with reference to the ongoing evaluation of the social impact of structural adjustment programmes.

Topics for further initiatives

90. The Preparatory Committee may wish to consider the following topic for further initiatives:

Ways and means to strengthen coordination between the Economic and Social Council, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, with regard to the ongoing evaluation of the social impact of structural adjustment programmes.

IX. Increasing resources allocated to social development

91. Just as preparation for the special session on sustainable development led inevitably to the issue of finance for sustainable policies, the issue of resources has become even more important in the context of social development. Human services, such as basic education and health care, technical and continuing education, information and extension services, care for the young, old and disabled and programmes to reduce marginalization of migrant, indigenous and other disadvantaged groups, are principally provided through public outlays in most countries. In all countries, the major part of some social services has to be provided through the public sector in order to ensure equitable accessibility. Therefore, ensuring adequate sources of revenue is essential.

92. The total amount of revenue available to pay for all public goods is a political choice, though a heavily constrained one, as is the proportion of it that is allocated to social services. There is a widespread tendency at present to believe that taxes must be cut under pressure of immutable global forces, an aspect of which is tax competition between countries. An issue for possible discussion is whether this is correct or is a misleading oversimplification. For example, in advanced economies, average proportional revenue collections have not fallen at all so far; in fact, the average proportion of gross domestic product (GDP) of Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries collected as revenue continued to edge up during the 1990s. It may well have plateaued by now, but it has only fallen in a few countries and those countries in which it has risen have offset this phenomenon. Data on developing countries vary more widely and are more difficult to interpret. The special session may wish to consider the dimensions of tax policy that are necessary to ensure that sufficient revenue is generated to pay for public services including social services. The issue is about ensuring sufficient public resources for public purposes.

93. Increases in revenue collections may well be feasible in many countries. The most notable exceptions are those in which the ratio of revenue to GDP is already high. Increased collections can commonly be achieved simply by improving the efficiency of tax administrations.

94. In a globalizing world, tax interactions among countries have to be kept under constant review. No forum currently exists to perform this function, and consideration might be given to establishing one. The need is likely to grow for some form of international cooperation and coordination to reduce the pressure on national revenue collection from unrestrained international tax competition.

95. Within many national budgets, there may well be scope for reconsidering the allocation of resources, for example by reducing military outlays in order to release funds for higher priority human services. Such reallocation has the twin benefits of improving services and of increasing labour-intensive employment.

96. Development cooperation assistance continues to be an issue of crucial importance to many countries with low average incomes or that experience national disasters. One possible intermediate target, which the special session could consider, would be agreeing to reverse the current decline; that is to say, the special session could agree to urge each donor country that has not reached the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for ODA, to decide to increase the proportion of its GNP allocated to aid for each of the next five years. At least five countries have started to do this or have announced plans to do so — Italy, Ireland, Germany, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom — in addition to those that are already providing more than 0.7 per cent, namely, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.

97. Recently, an international consensus seems to have coalesced around the need for substantial reduction in the debts of the poorest and heavily indebted low-income countries. Yet action has been slow, and the international debts of these countries remain a major constraint on poverty reduction strategies and overall development initiatives. It would be appropriate for the special session to consider the issue and provide further political support to appropriate efforts.

98. Another issue is that of private finance for development. In the aftermath of the international financial crisis, private financial flows to developing countries have declined and the picture for the future is less clear. The Committee could consider including issues relating to the attraction and management of direct foreign investment in the agenda of the special session, or determine whether such issues should more appropriately be left to a United Nations conference on finance for development.

Topics for further initiatives

99. The Preparatory Committee may wish to consider the following topics for further initiatives:

(a) Preparation of guidelines for policies aiming to collect sufficient revenue to pay for national social services, social protection and other social policies in the context of globalization;

(b) Identification of effective forms of international cooperation and coordination of taxation policy between countries so as to contain tax competition;

(c) Agreeing on further initiatives to substantially reduce the debts of the heavily indebted low-income countries;

(d) Reversing the current decline in ODA and efforts to reach the agreed international targets for such assistance;

(e) Ways and means to attract and manage direct foreign investment.

X. Implementation and institutional reform

100. One of the benefits of preparation for the special session will be the opportunity it offers for sharing experience with respect to national mechanisms used for implementing and monitoring Summit commitments. Some countries have included goals and policies based on those adopted at the Summit in national strategies; others have introduced new approaches to policy development, have renewed or maintained existing institutions or have sought additional external support. Some have done very little.

101. A tool that some countries have found useful is social impact assessment. The special session might wish to consider a clear commitment to the use of social impact assessments as a technique for evaluating national policy and programme initiatives and major projects. The establishment of national units for planning and evaluation of the effectiveness of policies and the strengthening of such units within international development cooperation agencies could be considered. This could be extended to introduction of international social auditing of the type undertaken in relation to economies by IMF and OECD.

102. All countries would benefit from stronger and more effective international commitment to implementation. Clarifying which strategic goals are to be sought in the field of social and economic development as well as better ways of achieving them is one of the main objectives of the United Nations system. The mandates as well as the policies and established practices of the specialized agencies and funds differ, making collaboration even more imperative. Policy implementation in many socio-economic areas requires not only the concerted efforts of international agencies but also cooperation beyond agency boundaries to ensure effectiveness.

103. One of the issues most frequently mentioned by delegates at the organizational session for consideration by the special session was standardizing social development indicators. Preparatory work is well advanced and the results were scheduled to be discussed at a meeting of the Economic and Social Council, which was to be held before the first session of the Committee. On the basis of the outcome of those discussions, the special session would be an appropriate occasion for international affirmation of this work.

104. With increasing international integration, strengthening international institutional arrangements for the development of social and economic strategy and policy-making is imperative. The United Nations, its funds and programmes, the specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions are all undergoing a process of reform and reorientation. Strengthening the Economic and Social Council system is one aspect of this, but more is required. With growing global integration more public goods can only be provided efficiently if they are organized on a cooperative international basis.

Topics for further initiatives

105. The Preparatory Committee may wish to consider the following topics for further initiatives:

(a) Measures designed to ensure that the objectives and policy approaches of the Summit are reflected effectively in the mandates, programmes and coordination arrangements of international institutions;

(b) Deciding on standardized development indicators;

(c) Additional public goods which should be organized and provided internationally.

XI. Conclusion

106. The present report discusses issues of current international concern, and suggests areas that could be addressed in the context of the special session. The Committee will provide the principal focused opportunity for Governments to comment on and propose additional issues and to suggest priorities. It is important to emphasize that preparation for the special session is a process including both Preparatory Committee meetings and sessions of the Commission for Social Development. This gives considerable opportunity for additional initiatives to be discussed and agreed before the special session. At the present stage, the crucial need is for identifying priorities and mandating the elaboration of a few specific initiatives.

107. Given the broad range of the issues discussed in the present report it would be valuable if a central theme which provides coherence to the debate is identified. For example, one central theme which embodies the issues discussed in the present report is "Putting social development at the centre of national and global political agendas".

108. Whether this or another theme is selected by the special session to facilitate the discussions and convey its main message, it may be feasible to narrow the range of issues on which the special session may wish to focus. The following list is an attempt at that (each of these is an issue of acute contemporary importance, and concrete action is

possible in relation to each; they are listed in the order in which they appear earlier in the present report, which reflects the sequence of the Commitments made at the Summit and not the order of their importance):

- Preparation of principles of socio-economic policy for responding to financial crises;
- Preparation of guidelines on the social responsibilities of business;
- Adoption of a global target for poverty eradication of halving the number of people living in absolute poverty by the year 2015;
- Establishment, strengthening and improvement of the management of national social protection systems;
- Mandating preparation of a global action programme for full employment in an integrating world;
- Refocusing macroeconomic policies so that social goals and priorities become central and are sought simultaneously with economic priorities;
- Strengthening procedures and institutions for social dialogue, including by encouraging growth of civil society organizations and guaranteeing freedom of association;
- Means of strengthening gender mainstreaming and promoting gender equality nationally and internationally;
- Mandating preparation of a new global plan of action to achieve access to education for all by 2015;
- Mandating preparation of a global plan of action to achieve access to basic health services for all by 2015;
- Strengthening support for activities to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS;
- Preparation of guidelines for policies aiming to collect sufficient revenue to pay for national social services, social protection and other social policies in the context of globalization.

109. In addition, the special session could also provide a political impetus on the following cross-cutting issues, which are also the subject of discussion in other forums:

- Identification of effective forms of international cooperation and coordination of taxation policy between countries so as to contain tax competition;
- Agreeing on further initiatives to substantially reduce the debts of the heavily indebted low-income countries;
- Reversing the current decline in ODA and efforts to reach the agreed international targets for such assistance;
- Deciding on standardized development indicators.

Notes

[1] See *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6–12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I, sect. C.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] Ibid., annex I.

[4] General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[5] General Assembly resolution 41/128 of 4 December 1986, annex.

[6] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 6* (E/1997/26), chap. I, sect. D., resolution 35/2, agreed conclusions on productive employment and sustainable livelihoods, para. 3.

[7] Ibid.

[8] General Assembly resolution 48/96 of 20 December 1993, annex.

[9] A/53/378, annex I.

[10] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1998, Supplement No. 6* (E/1998/26), chap. I, sect. B, resolution 36/1.

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Contributions from relevant organs, funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system

Note by the Secretariat

1. In paragraph 37 of its resolution 53/28 of 19 November 1998, the General Assembly invited all relevant organs, funds and programmes, as well as the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, to contribute to and be actively involved in the preparatory process and the special session by submitting contributions for the overall assessment of the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments as well as by, *inter alia*, submitting proposals for further actions and initiatives.

2. The Secretariat will circulate for the information of the Preparatory Committee, as a series of addenda to the present note, the relevant reports, which will be made available as received in the language or languages of submission.

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Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Contribution from the United Nations Environment Programme

The Secretariat circulates herewith for the information of the Preparatory Committee the attached report of the United Nations Environment Programme, which is available in English only.

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Annex

UNEP input to the preparation of the report on the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action: Social Development Summit

1. In September 21-25, UNFPA, UNEP and IUCN co-organized an International Workshop in Gland, Switzerland, on Interlinkages between Population, Poverty and the Environment (PPE). It reviewed conceptual and operational work in regard to PPE linkages, including tools and methodologies to respond to observed PPE linkages and agreed on conclusions and follow-up actions. UNFPA and UNEP plan to extend collaboration in this area to provide information, analysis, guidance and assistance for policy development and programming.

2. In collaboration with the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), UNU, UNDP, and UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), UNEP co-organized, and participated in, the Global Forum on Regional Development Policy on 2-4 December 1998 in Nagoya, Japan. UNEP's substantive contribution to the Global Forum was a policy paper entitled, "Poverty Reduction, Environmental Management and Regional Development: A Synthesis", which addressed the need for, and reviewed the experience in and the means of, integrating considerations of poverty reduction and environmental and natural resource management into spatial and regional development policy and planning. The proceedings of the Global Forum are expected to be published under UNCRD auspices. UNCRD and UNEP look forward to collaborating in developing information, analysis, advisory services and training in this field. The focus of this work will be on achieving synergy in action for poverty reduction and natural resource and environmental management in geographic regions at sub-national levels.

3. UNEP is engaged in developing environmental assessments using Geographic Information Systems, in conjunction with modern information technology, which, inter alia, seek to portray poverty-environment linkages. A recent pilot study, which UNEP carried out in collaboration with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), presents GIS-based mappings involving selected human development indicators (e.g. child mortality, adult female literacy, primary school enrolment, children with stunted growth) and population density, in relation to marginal or degraded land in various agro-climatic zones in West Africa. The joint CGIAR/UNEP publication was titled, "Mapping Indicators of Poverty in West Africa". UNEP plans to continue work in this area and to broaden inter-agency collaboration to relate such integrated mappings to other initiatives in mapping aspects of poverty (e.g. vulnerability to food insecurity) in the United Nations system. The idea behind this work to provide information support to decisionmakers and programme developers for poverty reduction and natural resource and environmental management.

4. Desertification, i.e. land degradation occurring in the arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid areas, which affects more than one billion people, is directly related to poverty. To provide authentic information on and to promote awareness of the nature, scope, significance, geographic distribution and climatic correspondence of desertification, its causes and effects, its relationship to biodiversity loss and climate change, and the policies and measures needed to combat it, UNEP published the Second Edition of World Desertification Atlas in 1997. This scientific publication includes consideration of the relationship between poverty and land degradation, and case studies from Mexico, Australia, Northwestern China and Northern Senegal which seek to elucidate it and address it. UNEP and IFAD have a joint programme to recognize community-level successful efforts aimed at combatting land degradation and improving living standards of affected people. Information abstracts of such community level programmes are published and disseminated jointly by IFAD and UNEP to promote replication of such initiatives.

5. The United Nations systemwide Special Initiative on Africa includes the "Equitable and Sustainable Use of Freshwater Resources", and the "fair share" approach to water resource management, among its priorities. The Special Initiative on Africa programme focuses primarily on changes in water policies, institutions and laws for bringing the poor majority into the mainstream of the sustainable water development agenda for Africa. UNEP co-chairs, with World Bank and World Meteorological Organization, the Water Working Group of the Initiative. A project proposal to put into practice the "fair share" approach is under development, in collaboration with the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

6. Following the Habitat-sponsored Cape Town consultation (1997) on "Partnership in the Water Sector for Cities of Africa", UNCHS and UNEP have launched an initiative to support provision of adequate access to drinking water and sanitation to urban populations living in poverty in Africa. The regional initiative is being developed and implemented within the framework of the United Nations Systemwide Special Initiative for Africa. Activities in selected African countries, funded by the United Nations Fund for International Partnership (UNFIP), seek to strengthen the capacities in African countries for integrated urban water management at city and river basin levels. UNEP-UNCHS cooperation also seeks to link local operational experience with global normative work in regard to sustainable freshwater management and urban development.

7. UNEP has been an active member of the ACC Network on Rural Development and Food Security, and contributed in May 1998 to the Network (which, inter alia, connects policymakers and analysts with field level action action) policy and programme review and analysis in regard to "Natural Resource and Environmental Management for Food Security". UNEP's contribution was published and disseminated on the Network's Internet homepage, and was also disseminated at the 24th meeting of Committee on World Food Security held in June 1998 when it reviewed the implementation of the Plan of Action of the World Food Summit.

8. UNEP participated actively in the Regional intergovernmental conferences held in Latin America and the Caribbean (April 1997), and in Asia and the Pacific (November 1997), under the auspices of ECLAC and ESCAP, respectively, to foster an integrated approach to implementing the programmes of action of United Nations global conferences in the fields of social development and environment. UNEP has striven to promote policy and programmatic synergies and efficiencies that might be achieved by way of coordinating and integrating action for natural resource and environmental management, food security, poverty reduction, gender equity and equality, and broad-based participation in the benefits of development.

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Addendum

Contribution from the International Monetary Fund

The Secretariat circulates herewith for the information of the Preparatory Committee the attached report of the International Monetary Fund, which is available in English only.

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Annex

World Summit for Social Development: IMF progress report

Following the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration the IMF has further strengthened its approach to support for countries' efforts to accelerate social progress and poverty alleviation, and has sought to incorporate the major recommendations of UN global conferences into its policy dialogue with each member country. As part of its activities in Africa, the IMF has also been actively involved in the TICAD process including in the implementation of the Tokyo Agenda for Action adopted at TICAD II.

- The IMF's policy advice and assistance to help countries **establish macroeconomic stability and sustainable high growth**, in line with its mandate, is central to its support for social and human development. The achievement of steady growth and low inflation will benefit the poorest segments of the population who are likely to be the most vulnerable to economic downturns and least able to protect the real value of their incomes and savings during high inflation, and ensure lasting reductions in poverty over the long term. In its dialogue with countries, the IMF has also given increasing emphasis to reforms aimed at achieving **high-quality growth** which will contribute to raising living standards and poverty alleviation, in particular, by improving the quality of fiscal adjustment, governance, and labor market reform.

- IMF policy advice, financial and technical assistance has sought to **improve the quality of public expenditure** by shifting resources away from unproductive outlays, such as excessive military expenditure, to infrastructure, basic education and health care which build physical and human capital and thus enhance broad-based growth and equity, and to targeted poverty alleviation programs.

In developing countries with IMF-supported programs military expenditure fell, on average, by 2.5 percentage points of GDP between 1990-97, compared with 1.3 percentage points of GDP in developing countries without a IMF-supported program. This decline in military outlays has allowed social expenditure to expand—available data for 52 countries indicate that military spending fell by an average of 3.1 percentage points of total expenditure, while social expenditure increased on average by 1.2 percentage points. As regards social spending, on the basis of data for 65 countries with IMF-supported programs during 1986-87, spending on health and education has, on average, increased in relation to GDP by 0.3 percentage points and 0.2 percentage points, respectively, since the start of IMF-supported programs. In Africa, and countries with ESAF-supported programs, increases of about double these magnitudes have been recorded. These increases have been accompanied by improvements in most of the education and health indicators that have recently been identified by the OECD/DAC, UN, and the World Bank to assess performance.

As part of the IMF's support for social development and poverty alleviation, guidelines have recently been given to IMF staff with the purpose of strengthening the monitoring of social

expenditures and social output indicators within the context of the IMF's surveillance activities and support for countries' adjustment programs.

- The IMF's policy advice and technical assistance has increasingly focussed on incorporating **cost-effective and financially viable social safety nets** into countries' reform programs. These safety nets may include subsidies or cash compensation targeted at vulnerable groups, improved distribution of eventual commodities, such as medicine, temporary price controls on some essential commodities, severance pay and retraining for retrenched public sector employees, employment through public works programs, and appropriate unemployment insurance and pension schemes.

- In its work in the social sector areas, the IMF relies on the expertise of other institutions, including the World Bank, regional development banks, the UNDP, ILO, and other UN agencies and efforts have been made to strengthen collaboration. The Bank and Fund collaborate closely in the context of Public Expenditure Reviews and more recently, building upon a general review of World Bank-IMF collaboration in 1998, measures are underway to better integrate social sector reforms in the design of countries' adjustment and reform programs, as well as to coordinate technical assistance and policy advice, including in public sector work. Also, in late 1998, a pilot initiative to strengthen collaboration between the WHO and the IMF on health related issues in low-income countries was started.

- The IMF also has an interest in **income distribution** issues and that all members of society have an opportunity to share in the benefits of economic growth. Adjustment programs that are equitable and growth that is equitable are more likely to be sustainable and to reduce poverty. Reflecting these considerations, in June 1998, the IMF hosted a conference on economic policy and equity to discuss operational issues faced by governments seeking to formulate and implement equitable policies. The IMF's efforts to promote basic health and education will also indirectly contribute to improvements in equity.

- **Good governance** contributes to high-quality pro-poor growth and to social development. Policies that strengthen good governance can help to make adjustment and reform a participatory process in which stakeholders in society, including the poor, have a greater chance to express their concerns, needs, and join in a partnership. The IMF has sought through its advice and technical assistance to improve governance through, inter alia, greater transparency and accountability in the formulation of and implementation of all aspects of economic policy. This can contribute to greater equality of opportunity and access, and help eliminate the diversion of scarce public resources to fraudulent and corrupt activity. Most recently, in order to strengthen its attention to governance issues, the IMF issued a guidance note in 1997 on its role in this area.

- An important element of the IMF's mandate is to promote **high levels of employment**. High sustainable growth and labor market reform supports this goal. The IMF supports labor market policies that ensure labor market flexibility, and encourage training,

retraining, and the mobility of workers within and between sectors and regions, supported by adequate unemployment benefits. The IMF also supports the core labor standards advocated by the ILO. In the area of labor market and related social policy reforms the IMF has intensified its collaboration with the ILO since 1995. Guidelines on collaboration with the ILO were issued to the IMF staff in 1996. Contact between staff at the country level has been made more systematic and further strengthened especially through resident representatives. Also, in 1996, several countries were selected as pilot cases for enhanced collaboration, and in 1998, Russia was added to the list of pilots. The IMF has also intensified collaboration at a general policy level, including through participation in conferences and seminars most recently in the high-level tripartite ILO meetings in Bangkok in 1997, in 1998, and 1999. Also in May 1998, the IMF organized a seminar with the ILO to improve IMF's staff understanding of core labor standards and the ILO's role in setting these standards and monitoring their implementation.

- In 1987, the IMF established the **Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility** (ESAF) to provide concessional resources in support of low-income countries' adjustment and reform programs, including adequate social support. To date, 58 of the 79 eligible countries have used its resources for three-year adjustment program. Recent internal and external reviews of the ESAF found that most countries pursuing policy reforms with the support of the ESAF had materially strengthened their economies in the past 10 years, and that these gains have helped improved growth and living standards. The recent reviews of the ESAF emphasized the need for more World Bank support for structural reforms and social sector issues, particularly for undertaking more systematic assessments of the impact of ESAF-supported program reforms on vulnerable groups. To this end, and in particular to better integrate social sector issues in ESAF-supported programs, a pilot program was launched in 1996 for 6 countries (Cameroon, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Tajikistan, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe) for greater collaboration between the two institutions.

Reflecting the success of the ESAF in supporting countries' reform efforts, in 1996 it was decided that this facility should remain available to the Fund's poorest members on a sustained basis. Since then, efforts have been underway to secure the needed financing, much of which has already been pledged by IMF members.

- In 1996, the World Bank and IMF launched the **Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative**. The objective of the Initiative is to reduce the external debt of the world's poorest, most heavily indebted countries, mostly in Africa, to sustainable levels. The Initiative provides substantial debt relief to countries which implement sound economic policies and critical social reforms as part of an integrated approach to lasting development. The Initiative has focussed on ensuring that resources released through debt relief are used for productive outlays, in particular, for social sector and poverty alleviation programs. Considerable progress has been achieved since 1996. Twelve countries have been reviewed for HIPC assistance, US$6 billion of debt relief has been committed to seven countries (Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guyana, Mali, Mozambique, and Uganda), and assistance has been

released to Uganda, and to Bolivia. In September 1998, the IMF and World Bank agreed to extend the deadline for countries to adopt IMF and World Bank-supported economic programs in order to enter into the HIPC process by two years to end-2000. Also, it was agreed that for post-conflict cases, performance under emergency assistance programs would be considered—on a case-by-case basis—as part of the first phase track record.

Some consider the HIPC Initiative should provide more debt relief to more countries, more quickly. In 1999, a review of the HIPC Initiative is being undertaken, including an examination of the effectiveness of the Initiative and whether it should be strengthened. The review will be based on a process of consultation, seeking the views of member countries, multilateral creditors, NGOs, religious groups, and other interested institutions, which has already begun with a request for written views and a series of seminars around the world. At the same time, the IMF is pressing ahead to secure the full financing of the cost of its participation in the HIPC Initiative.

- **Post-conflict countries** face particularly difficult challenges in trying to restore social order and economic growth. The IMF has contributed a wide range of support as part of concerted international efforts to assist post-conflict countries. In 1995, it was decided that the IMF could also provide financial support to post-conflict countries at a relatively early stage under its emerging assistance policy. Since then, such assistance has been provided to six countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, Tajikistan, Republic of Congo, and Sierra Leone, most of which have subsequently progressed to regular IMF arrangements. The IMF is currently exploring new approaches to assist post-conflict countries more quickly and effectively.

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Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Contribution from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

The Secretariat circulates herewith for the information of the Preparatory Committee the attached report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, which is available in English only.

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Annex

FAO contribution for the special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and further initiatives

The World Food Summit

The contribution of FAO to the implementation of the Social Summit is integrated with the actions taken by the Organization and the mechanisms established to coordinate UN System-wide activities in the follow-up to the World Food Summit (WFS)

The complementarity of the objectives and activities of the WFS Plan of Action and the World Summit for Social Development are rooted in the strong link between rural poverty, hunger and food insecurity. At the World Food Summit the Heads of State and Government declared that "Poverty is a major cause of food insecurity and sustainable progress in poverty eradication is critical to improve access to food". Both the WFS and the WSSD agree that poverty, hunger and malnutrition continue to be concentrated in rural areas throughout much of the developing world. Of the 720 million people classified as poor by the World Bank, 75% live in rural areas where they depend primarily on agriculture directly or indirecdy as their principal livelihood, source of income and employment, as well as for the betterment of their conditions. The WFS Plan of Action and WSSD share common objectives and strategies for poverty eradication through the implementation of income generation, and employment creation programmes.

To this end the WFS Plan of Action states the following relevant objectives (para 2.1) "To pursue poverty eradication, among both urban and rural poor, and sustainable food security for all as a policy priority and to promote, through sound national policies, secure and gainful employment and equitable and equal access to productive resources such as land, water and credit, so as to maximise the incomes of the poor" and "To adopt policies that create conditions which encourage stable employment, especially in rural areas, including off-farm jobs, so as to provide sufficient earnings to facilitate the purchase of basic necessities, as well as encourage labour intensive technologies where appropriate."

Further, reinforcing shared views and common objectives of recent international conferences, the World Food Summit Plan of Action recognized that "Reaching sustainable world food security is part and parcel of achieving the social, economic, environmental and human development objectives agreed upon in recent international conferences" and builds on consensus reached in these fora. The Plan of Action urges "governments, in partnership with all actors of civil society" to "review and adopt policies to pursue the eradication of hunger and attain sustainable food security at the household and national levels as a top policy priority, and make every effort to eliminate obstacles such as unemployment and lack of access to factors of production that adversely affect the attainment of food security," and to "implement the relevant commitments they entered into at the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen 1995".

In this context it can be observed that FAO's activities in the follow-up to the World Food Summit complement the outcome of the major UN conferences and summits held in recent years such as the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen 1995) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995)

Inter-agency collaboration in support of WFS follow-up

In April 1997, the Administrative Committee on Coordination of the United Nations (ACC) endorsed the proposal by FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to establish the ACC Network on Rural Development and Food Security. The Network replaces the former ACC Subcommittee on Rural Development and constitutes the mechanism for inter-agency follow-up to the WFS.

At the country level, the Network consists of Thematic Groups on rural development and food security established within the UN Resident Coordinator System. Thematic groups already created or under formation in 75 countries typically include the participation of national institutions, bilateral donors and representatives of civil society in addition to UN organizations and are engaged in supporting concrete national activities to promote food security and rural development.

At the headquarters level, the Network includes 20 interested UN organizations which participate in and support the country-level groups. The Network is being jointly coordinated and backstopped by FAO and IFAD in close cooperation with WFP. The Network has an Internet site and is also using other new information technologies (including e-mail list servers) to promote information exchange and foster interactive networking among countries and regions, and between Network members at all levels.

Food security, poverty alleviation and rural development activities

FAO's programme of work has been focused on the overall goal of eradicating hunger and food insecurity, a process that involves most of the programmes of the Organization which aim at improving standards of living and food security, particularly for the rural poor, who depend upon agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries activities for their livelihood. Emphasis has been put on providing assistance to the Low-Income, Food Deficit Countries (LIFDCs). In 1994 FAO launched the Special Programme on Food Security (SPFS) which aims at helping LIFDCs to improve their national food security through rapid increases of agricultural production and productivity in an environmentally-sustainable and socially equitable way, particularly focusing on small farmers who are often among the poorest segments of the population.

FAO made a detailed analysis of the food situation in the least developed countries (LDCs) and net food-importing developing countries (NFIDCs) and how these countries have been affected by the sharp price increases during 1995/96 and by reductions in the level of concessional food availability in recent years. It was observed that the food import bills of the NFIDCs and of the LDCs rose by US$ 200 million to reach US$ 7.2 billion in 1997/98 which, although lower than the high level of US$ 8.0 billion in 1995/96 is still much higher than the 1994/95 level of US$ 5.9 billion.

The development of the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping System (FIVIMS), a cooperative inter-agency effort called for by the World Food Summit, has been actively pursued with FAO serving as permanent secretariat to an Inter-agency Working Group on FIVIMS. Guidelines for establishment of FIVIMS at national level were submitted to the 24th session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in 1998.

FAO contributed towards the development of efficient emergency response mechanisms through the Global Early Warning and Food Information System (GIEWS.) An important channel used for bilateral and multi-lateral rehabilitation programmes is the provision, through FAO, of agricultural inputs to rehabilitate farmers in post-emergency situations.

As part of the follow-up to WFS and the International Conference on Nutrition, FAO continued to support national food and nutrition plans and policies, established or reinforced in 106 countries. Aspects of particular relevance to the poor and vulnerable, such as street foods, urban and peri-urban agriculture, supply and distribution of food in the cities, and community nutrition programmes, have been subject of studies, recommendations and action by relevant units in the Organization.

In 1997, the FAO Conference and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights adopted resolutions in support of the implementation of the WFS objective to "clarify the content of the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, as stated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other relevant international and regional instruments, and to give particular attention to implementation and full and progressive realization of this right as a means of achieving food security for all". To this end, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Director-General of FAO and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR).

In support of the mandate given to the Committee on World Food Security to monitor progress in implementation of the WFS Plan of Action, FAO elicited reports from governments, UN agencies and other relevant international institutions on their action until end 1997 in implementing the Plan of Action. Reports from more than 100 countries and 33 international institutions were received and submitted to the CFS at its 24th Session. Many developing countries reported that their main policy priority was the eradication of poverty and achievement of sustainable food security for all. While policies and programmes to eradicate poverty were generally a continuation of the past, several countries have initiated new actions as a follow-up to the WFS. Several LIFDCs referred to the FAO-supported Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) as part of their strategy to alleviate poverty.

Other FAO-supported poverty alleviation programmes often include concrete measures to enhance participatory development of local institutions of the poor, empowerment of weak and vulnerable rural people, and formation of small groups and community-based organizations. Other programmes are aimed at enhancing access to land and/or security of tenure, as well as development of infrastructure and basic social services, land improvement through irrigation, access to credit, marketing, processing and development of storage facilities. Expansion of employment opportunities through promotion of labour intensive rural projects is also pursued to tackle poverty.

In the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action, FAO formulated its own "Plan of Action for Women in Development (1996-2001)" which seeks to stimulate growth with equality, while reducing rural poverty and achieving food security, through the provision of adequate and equitable access to productive resources and essential supporting services to both rural women and men. The Plan responds to the follow-up to the World Food Summit (WFS) as

well as the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) by focusing on the design and implementation of gender-responsive policies and programmes that reduce or eliminate legislative and administrative, as well as socio-economic obstacles to productive resources for rural women.

To this end, FAO offers technical support services and policy advice to Member Nations, covering a wide range of activities that seek to integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policy-making and planning activities. Such activities include provision of advice on institutional capacity building, generation of reliable gender-disaggregated statistical databases, holding workshops, undertaking research, conducting training courses, and provision of methodological tools for the analysis of socio-economic and gender issues.